TASK FORCE TO UPDATE SEXUAL MISCONDUCT POLICIES

Membership

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The Rev. Canon Carol Cole Flanagan, *Vice-Chair*	Washington, D.C., III	2018
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Mandate

This Task Force is charged with fulfilling the mandates of two (2) General Convention [GC] resolutions -- one (1) to update safe church policies, and the other to update safe church training materials. Both resolutions require updated policies and materials to reflect the experience of The Episcopal Church [TEC] in using the 2004 Model Policies and Safeguarding training materials, and to cover topics such as social media, mission trips, pilgrimages, camp and conference center programs, and other overnight events, as well as experiences of LGBTQ persons.

While the focus of Resolution 2015-A073 is limited to children and youth (Update Model Policies for Protection of Children and Youth), the scope of Resolution 2015-A074 (Update the Safeguarding Materials) is broader, encompassing both vulnerable adults, and children and youth. The "Safeguarding Materials" referenced in Resolution 2015-A074 include both *Safeguarding God's People* and *Safeguarding God's Children.* Given that effective updated training must reflect updated policies, the Task Force first needed to update policies for the protection of vulnerable adults, and children and youth, before envisioning effective updated training materials.

The fourth resolve in Resolution 2015-A073 requires that the updated model policies "be promulgated after they are approved by the Special Task Group," thereby granting the Task Force authority and responsibility to approve the updated model policies and promulgate them across TEC.

No funds were budgeted in this triennium to update training materials.

Summary of Work

MEETINGS

As of this writing, the Task Force has met regularly for over two (2) years; beginning in November of 2015. At the invitation of the GCO, the Task Force convened five (5) in-person meetings: 11/18-21/2015 in Baltimore, MD; 5/2-4/2016 in Nashville, TN; 11/5-8/2016 in Chicago, IL; 3/27-30/17 in Baltimore, MD; and 9/27-30/2017 in Renton, WA. The bulk of these in-person meetings were dedicated to reviewing precedents and responses to surveys, consulting experts, designing updated training and drafting Updated Model Policies.

In addition to the five (5) in-person meetings, the Task Force met regularly by telephone, primarily to set goals for our work between in-person meetings and to assess progress. To date, the Task Force has had eighteen (18) phone meetings: 4/4/16, 7/28/16, 12/8/16, 1/10/17, 2/9/17, 3/9/17, 4/17/17, 5/8/17, 6/5/17, 7/6/17, 8/3/17, 8/17/17, 9/7/17, 10/12/17, 11/9/17, 11/16/17, 11/28/17 and 11/30/17. In order to complete our mandate, we anticipate additional phone meetings, four (4) of which are scheduled for 12/7/17, 12/15/17, 1/11/18 and 2/15/18. Ms. Bronwyn Clark Skov participated in many of these meetings as the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society [DFMS] staff liaison to the Task Force.

PROCESS TO UPDATE MODEL POLICIES

Before beginning substantive work, the Task Force resolved to ground all model polices and training materials in theology and our Baptismal Covenant, which calls all baptized members of TEC to the highest standards of behavior when interacting with vulnerable populations. In addition, the Task Force committed to providing model polices that are accessible to anyone on a parish, diocesan or provincial level by providing sufficient detail and guidance to enable anyone to fully embrace and adhere to the standards set forth.

The Task Force analyzed the 2004 Model Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse as published by the Church Pension Group [CPG], conducted an informal review of policies in a number of dioceses and explored the challenges to compliance with the 2004 policies. In addition, the Task Force reviewed the Model Policy for the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation of Adults, also published by CPG.

The Task Force's initial draft of updated model policies was informed by the experience of Task Force members, and the formal and informal networks with which they interact. The Task Force took into account not only the need to address social media, mission trips, pilgrimages, camp and conference center programs, other overnight events and the experiences of LGBTQ persons (as delineated in the resolutions), but also the challenges presented by the diversity of contexts in which such policies will be implemented in TEC; resourced parishes and dioceses and those with fewer financial and human

resources, as well as those with a history of complying with all safe church policies and training and those without such history and experience.

The Task Force created two (2) initial, draft model policies-- one (1) for the protection of children and youth, and two (2) for the protection of vulnerable adults. In May 2017, through the GCO, these draft model polices were circulated to over fifty (50) individuals and networks across TEC for review and comment. Reviewers included bishops, diocesan staff members responsible for or experienced with safe church related matters, paid and unpaid parish staff responsible for implementing safe church policies, subject matter experts on aging, those engaged in Hispanic ministry and those engaged in LGBTQ+ advocacy.

All comments submitted by reviewers were analyzed by the Task Force. Some reviewers were interviewed to better understand and appreciate their unique perspectives. All comments submitted were considered by the Task Force in the final revision of the approved Model Policies.

The Model Policies attached to this report as Supplementary Materials were approved by the Task Force on November 28, 2017. Pursuant to these Model Policies, each diocese is to adopt policies in accordance with these Model Policies by January 1, 2019.

CONTENT OF UPDATED MODEL POLICIES

Both updated Model Policies (for the Protection of Children and Youth, and for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults) are grounded in theology and our Baptismal Covenant. Our care for all of God's creation is built upon this foundation. Therefore, the Updated Model Polices begin with a theological statement.

Recognizing that dioceses and parishes have familiarity and experience with the 2004 Model Polices as promulgated by CPG, the Task Force sought to retain the major components of those policies, namely, definitions, application and screening, education and training, monitoring and supervision, and responding to concerns. The segments of the Update Model Polices include:

I.   Theological and Ethical Foundations

II.   Expectation and Local Implementation

III.   Definitions

IV.   Application and Screening

V.   Education and Training

VI.   Monitoring and Supervision

VII.   Responding to Concerns

VIII.   Policy Adoption, Implementation, and Audit

Appendix A — Screening and Training Protocols (a chart that clearly delineates the level of screening and type of training required to participate in specific ministry functions).

Appendix B — Recommended Practices and Guidelines for Social Media and Electronic Communications for Children and Youth OR Vulnerable Adults

Both Model Policies (one for ministry with Children and Youth, the other for ministry with Vulnerable Adults) are constructed to be as similar to each other as possible; the structure is identical, as are many of the provisions. This will facilitate learning and familiarity with standards set out in the Model Policies. Provisions vary in each Model Policy only as necessary to address specific needs of each vulnerable population.

The Model Policies include provisions for mission trips, pilgrimages, camp and conference center programs, and other overnight events. They include definitions that reflect our current understanding of gender identity and sexuality, including Cisgender, Gender Non-binary, LGBTQ+ and Transgender, as well as provisions to enhance the understanding, welcoming and safety of all gender identities and expressions.

The Model Policies also set out a new vision for safe church training as reflected in the chart in Appendix A — Screening and Training Protocols, and as described below.

VISION & DESIGN TO UPDATE SAFE CHURCH TRAINING
The Updated Model Policies reflect a new vision for safe church training that fosters a culture of safety and inclusion for all people and includes specialized training tailored to ministry roles and functions. Accordingly, the Task Force created a plan for written and web-based training materials that includes responsive and multilingual online web-based resources, a modern content management system that will allow various users to easily access the Model Policies as well as training opportunities and resources.

The web-based site will provide *Universal Training* accessible to all congregants and ministry participants that foster a culture of safety and inclusion for all people. This will include a broad overview of issues of vulnerability, power imbalance and healthy boundaries; designed to equip all people to live out their Baptismal Covenant. For those who oversee a ministry or program, or who supervise others engaged in a ministry with a vulnerable population, there will also be easily accessible *Specialized Training* consisting of discrete modules on topics directly related and tailored to each role and ministry function in a congregation or diocese. *Universal Training* and *Specialized Training* are defined in the text of Updated Model Policies and referred to in Screening and Training Protocols, as set out in Appendix A of the Model Policies.

The Task Force envisions the architecture and layout of the safe church training website to automatically guide users through the applicable training modules. By way of illustration, a chaperone

on a youth mission trip need only access the website, identify their role in the upcoming mission trip, and the website will automatically identify and guide them through the modules relevant to that role, omitting modules that are not directly relevant to the specific ministry. In this example, there would be no need for training on how to conduct public records checks, interview applicants or supervise others.

The envisioned website design is similar to that currently being constructed to provide TEC with training on clergy disciplinary processes as set out in Title IV of the Constitution and Canons. This work is overseen by the Standing Commission on Structure, Governance, Constitution and Canons. The Task Force consulted with Polly Getz, *Chair* of the Standing Commission, and Craig Wirth, an employee with the Diocese of Utah who is designing and implementing the web-based product that the Commission is creating for Title IV training materials. Ideally, the safe church training website and the Title IV training website will be linked so the user can seamlessly explore options and responsibilities under Title IV and the Model Policies.

The website should also allow congregations and dioceses to track successful completion of training modules for each individual trainee. Additional support to dioceses and congregations could be provided through this website by including online offerings for forum discussions and/or private messaging tools with designated persons serving as resources on sexual misconduct issues that can assist church leaders in fostering discussions needed for resolution of issues in their church or diocese.

The Task Force envisions a fine tuned and reoriented safe church training program with each training module reflecting our call to treat all with dignity and respect. It is out of this call that trainees will be equipped to take action when there is reason to suspect abuse, neglect or exploitation or other violation of the Model Policy. The images and texts contained in all training modules will need to be carefully reviewed to ensure they promote respect for the dignity of all vulnerable populations including LGBTQ+ individuals. The content will not be fear based and will be designed so as not to trigger emotional distress or re-victimize trainees who may have been abused in a church or other setting. One outcome of this training based on the Model Polices will be to reduce risk and resulting litigation; even though the training program is not focused on fear of liability and harm.

The Task Force is not recommending a specific provider for training modules or website design and architecture. The Task Force envisions that there may be a number of varied providers for training modules that will be included in the website. It is anticipated that much of the content of the modules can be curated from already existing resources. Some modules will need to be created to reflect the needs and context of TEC at this time. The Task Force could not implement the vision for updated training during this triennium as there was no funds that were budgeted for such work. This is some of the work that will need to be completed during the next triennium.

WORK REMAINING FOR THE NEXT TRIENNIUM

The web-based vehicle will need to be constructed, and training content will need to be curated and/or created in the next triennium. Plans for publicizing and promoting the Model Policies and website need to be drawn up and carried out, and plans for ongoing curation and maintenance of the site will need to be designed. (Ongoing curation will allow materials to reflect the latest research and trends, reducing the likelihood of the need for a significant revision/update of training materials in the future.) In addition, arrangements will need to be made to produce some written training materials as required by GC Resolution 2015-A074.

Resolutions to support this work appear below.

Proposed Resolutions

RESOLUTION A048: ESTABLISH COMMITTEE TO OVERSEE CREATION OF TRAINING MATERIALS

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, that this 79th General Convention direct the Executive Council to establish a committee of the Council to oversee the creation and implementation of new safe church training materials to be developed during the next triennium to reflect the approved 2017 Model Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth and the approved 2017 Model Policies for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults, such committee to be comprised of not more than nine (9) people who reflect the diversity of The Episcopal Church, which should include youth ministers, those working with vulnerable adults, educators for adults, and those experienced in the prevention of sexual abuse; membership should also include at least three (3) persons from the Task Force to Update Sexual Misconduct Policies appointed in 2015; and be it further

Resolved, That such safe church training materials for the prevention of sexual misconduct include written and web-based training materials that include responsive and multilingual online web-based resources, a modern content management system and a curated resource list, such training to provide Universal Training accessible to all congregants and ministry participants that fosters a culture of safety and inclusion for all people and Specialized Training consisting of discrete modules on topics directly related to ministry roles and functions; and be it further

Resolved, That this 79th General Convention request the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance to consider a budget allocation of $50,000 for the implementation of this resolution.

Explanation: A strong training program is essential for the effective implementation of and compliance with the Model Policies. The establishment of a working group of members with related experience and expertise will ensure that the training materials fill this role.

RESOLUTION A049: HOST MODEL POLICIES ON DFMS WEBSITE.

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, that this 79th General Convention direct the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society [DFMS] to host on its website the Model Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth and the Model Policies for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults for

the prevention of sexual misconduct approved in 2017, the safe church training materials for such prevention including a comprehensive list of resources and to institute a procedure to update the training materials and curate the resources listed; and be it further

Resolved, That this 79th General Convention direct the Office of the General Convention [GCO] to oversee such hosting, updating and curation responsibilities.

Explanation: In order to be used by dioceses, congregations and members of the Church, the Model Policies, safe church training materials, and resources must be readily available and accessible. The website maintained by DFMS is the natural site for the wide access needed for implementation and compliance. In addition, the website, as envisioned, will require curation to keep the training materials and resources up to date and relevant.

RESOLUTION A050: FUNDING FOR SAFE CHURCH TRAINING

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, that this 79th General Convention of The Episcopal Church commits itself to the financial support of developing and maintaining safe church training materials to reflect the Model Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth, and Model Policies for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults approved in 2017, and the prevention of sexual misconduct, to be developed during the next triennium, to advance clergy wellness and reduce liability, with costs to be shared equally by the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society [DFMS], and the Church Pension Group [CPG], and requests that the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance provide a budget allocation for half the cost, $245,000 and directs the Church Pension Group [CPG] to provide the matching $245,000 to provide safe church training materials to implement the Model Policies.

Explanation: An updated, easily accessible safe church training program is essential for the effective implementation of and compliance with the Model Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth, and Model Policies for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults as approved in 2017. Such safe church training programs will also support the reduction of liability, enhancement of wellness of clergy and laity, and furtherance of all members' ability to more fully live out their Baptismal Covenant. Safe church training materials will consist of written and web-based training materials that include responsive and multilingual online web-based resources, a modern content management system and a curated resource list. The Model Policies set out Universal Training accessible to all congregants and ministry participants that fosters a culture of safety and inclusion for all people, and Specialized Training consisting of discrete modules on topics directly related to ministry roles and functions.

The Task Force created a detailed report of these anticipated costs which was provided to the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance in April 2017.

RESOLUTION A051: MODIFY PAROCHIAL REPORT

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, that this 79th General Convention request the Committee on the State of the Church to consider adding the following with respect to parish and congregation *Safe Church Self-Audits* as required by the Model Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth and the Model Policies for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults approved in 2017: (1) the total number of parish and congregation Safe Church Self-Audits expected to be submitted to the diocese,

(2) the number of self-audits received by the diocese, (3) the number of outstanding self-audits, and (4) the date when outstanding self-audits are expected to be received.

Explanation: Including the status of parish and congregation safe church self-audits on the diocesan parochial report is the basis for tracking accountably with the Model Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth and Model Policies for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults as approved in 2017. Such accountability will serve to identify those dioceses and locations that would benefit from enhanced support to fully live into the Model Policies.

Supplementary Materials

MODEL POLICY FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

This model policy includes the following segments:

- Theological and Ethical Foundations
- Expectations and Local Implementation
- Definitions
- Application and Screening
- Education and Training
- Monitoring and Supervision
- Responding to Concerns
- Policy Adoption, Implementation, and Audit

- Appendix A — Screening and Training Protocols
- Appendix B — Recommended Practices and Guidelines for Social Media and Electronic Communications for Children and Youth

Theological and Ethical Foundations

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

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

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

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

The Church is called to embody and advance God's mission. Ministry is the vocation of the whole community: laypersons, deacons, priests, and bishops who together represent Christ and the Church in the world.

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

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

This document is a statement for the Episcopal Church, setting forth expectations for its leaders in their relationships with children and youth. The purpose of these model policies is to foster the highest standards of behavior in ministry settings. The document includes:

a. *Screening and Training Protocols* (Appendix A), which explains the level of screening and training required before engaging in ministry with children and youth;

b. a description of requisite training that is specialized and tailored to ministry role and function;

c. behavioral standards designed to ensure that children and youth and all who engage in ministry with them are treated with dignity and respect in all settings;

d. *Recommended Practices and Guidelines for Social Media and Electronic Communications* (Appendix B);

Expectations and Local Implementation

This model policy sets forth statements of general expectations and guidelines of behavior for ordained and lay people in the church when engaged in ministry with children and youth. This policy is mandated for all such activities sponsored by every congregation, institution, organization, school and agency of each diocese. The purpose of these policies is to create a safe and welcoming space for all children and youth in our communities; and those engaged in ministry with children and youth and to prevent sexual abuse.

This policy is a model and, as such, it presents best practices for creating such safe space. Circumstances in many localities may make some of these best practices difficult to implement or even unworkable. As a result, local entities may make additions or revisions in developing local policy so long as they meet or exceed the requirements of these policies. This requires that local leadership understand this policy thoroughly enough to make appropriate judgments about local circumstances.

Any such additions or revisions must be submitted in writing for the approval of the Bishop. No provisions may be omitted from a local policy.

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

No policy can foresee every possible circumstance to which it may be applied. Whenever applicable, questions of civil, criminal, and/or ecclesiastical discipline and employment offenses should be addressed with the relevant authorities immediately.   Please contact the Office of the Bishop for consultation and resources if assistance is needed.

DEFINITIONS

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

Adult: Anyone who is 18 years or older and not in high school. [1]

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

Child: Anyone under the age of 12 years. [1]

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

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

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

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

Leader: A person, adult or youth, who, for the benefit of another, engages in ministry without responsibility for oversight of others engaged in that same ministry. Examples include Sunday school teachers, camp counselors and program teams.

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

Mandated Reporter: A person who is required by state law to report reasonable suspicions of abuse, neglect and/or exploitation of vulnerable populations to the appropriate state agency. State laws vary greatly. Generally, state law mandates that either all adults or adults in certain professions report suspected abuse of children and/or youth. It is imperative to know the requirements of applicable state laws. Typically, individuals who are not mandated to report suspicion of abuse may make a report to the appropriate state agency, even though not legally required to do so.

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

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

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

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

Programs: Official activities and programs sponsored by The Episcopal Church and its Provinces, Dioceses and congregations (examples include: The Episcopal Youth Event, Provincial Youth Events, Happening, Teens Encounter Christ, Pilgrimages, Mission Experiences, New Beginnings, camp programs, Acolyte Festival, etc.).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- **Universal Training**: A standard of training that will foster a culture of safety and inclusion for all people that includes a broad overview of issues of vulnerability, power, and healthy boundaries. This training is designed to equip all people to live out their Baptismal Covenant.

- **Specialized Training**: A standard of additional training that equips people who participate in or have oversight responsibility for ministries. In addition to Universal Training, a person will have access to training that is specialized and tailored to their role and ministry function.

Youth: Anyone who is at least twelve (12) years old, but not yet eighteen (18) years old. A youth may also be an individual who is eighteen (18) years old or older, and still in high school.[1]

Application and Screening

Dioceses, congregations and other organizations are required to screen all persons according to the standards in the *Screening and Training Protocols* (Appendix A). For some positions, screening consists only of a Public Records Check. For other positions there are additional screening requirements of a written application, interview and reference verification.

A. Public Records Checks

1. Congregations and other organizations shall use a provider approved by the diocese to conduct public records checks. Such checks must be completed before the employee or volunteer begins interacting with children and youth;
2. Criminal public records checks shall include all available criminal records and sex offender registries;
3. A Department of Motor Vehicles [DMV] records check is needed if transporting children and youth as part of, or an extension of, ministry of the church or for a church-sponsored event;
4. A credit check is required with check signing authority; and
5. Public records checks must be updated at least every five (5) years.

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[1] Ages established in accordance with generally accepted definitions in the United States. These ages may vary across the wider Episcopal Church.

B. Written application, interview and reference verification are required before serving in certain roles and ministries as specified in the **Screening and Training Protocols** (Appendix A). Where required, these components are generally conducted in the following order:

1. Submission of a completed written application to serve in a specified role with a clearly defined written "job description." The application includes verifiable personal information;
2. Personal interview;
3. Reference verification conducted by congregations and other organizations to verify personal information and check references listed in the application (people who know but are not related to the applicant); and
4. Maintenance of these records as described below.

Potential Leaders or Supervisors must be known and active in the congregation for at least six (6) months before engaging in ministry with children and youth unless they are required to have public records checks and reference checks pursuant to the **Screening and Training Protocols** (Appendix A).

Dioceses, congregations and other organizations must keep and maintain all application and screening records secure and confidential in the Diocese, congregation's or organization's office. This includes a signature by each applicant verifying receipt of a copy of this policy, including any local procedures or variations.

Education and Training

Training shall be appropriate to each person's function according to the **Screening and Training Protocols** (Appendix A).

All Leaders shall have Universal Training that fosters a culture of safety and inclusion for all people and covers a broad overview of issues of vulnerability, power, and healthy boundaries. Universal Training is designed to equip all people to live out their Baptismal Covenant. All members of the Episcopal Church shall have access to this training.

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

Depending on role and responsibility, Specialized Training should include:

• the prevention, identification and response to all forms of abuse and neglect;
• vulnerability within the pastoral relationship;
• an introduction to gender non-binary;
• the needs of LGBTQ+ children and youth;
• the ways that children and youth can engage in self-advocacy; and
• the needs of differently-abled children and youth.

Certification of training shall be renewed every three (3) years.

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

Monitoring and Supervision of Programs

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

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

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

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

Unrelated Adults Required

There shall be at least two (2) unrelated adults (at least two (2) years older than the eldest participant) present at ministry settings and events designed for children and youth. If unanticipated circumstances result in an adult being alone with children or youth, that adult shall report those circumstances to the Supervisor, Clergy in charge, senior warden, or Responsible Person as soon as possible.

Only one (1) adult may be sufficient in well-monitored, visually accessible program space on the church grounds, such as a Sunday School classroom, provided that another adult can maintain visual contact with the adult program leader. This can be accomplished by designating an individual to conduct frequent random checks of classrooms and unlocked spaces throughout the building(s). These exceptional circumstances must be specifically described in a written document and approved by the governing body of the congregation. See also sections on *Overnight Programs* and *Transportation*.

Creating Safe Space for Children and Youth

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

For example:

1. Alcoholic beverages. Alcohol (sacramental or otherwise) shall not be stored in publicly accessible areas of the church buildings.

2. <u>Computers and electronic devices</u>. Children and youth shall have adequate supervision when using electronic devices belonging to Dioceses, congregations and other organizations. Devices shall have adequate password protection. Each user shall have their own account and password. See Appendix B — Recommended Practices and Guidelines for Social Media and Electronic Communications.

3. <u>Persons with keys and access to locked spaces</u>. Anyone with keys or electronic access to church buildings shall meet all the requirements for screening and training according to the Screening and Training Protocols (Appendix A).

4. <u>Unused spaces.</u> Spaces not in use should not be readily accessible. Given the vast differences in facilities, each Diocese, congregation, and other organization should determine how best to meet this standard.

One-to-One Conversations with Children or Youth

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

1. Planned or unplanned on-site conversations can take place in a public location, away from where others can hear but in view of other adults.

2. Planned off-site conversations/meetings can take place in a public place (such as a coffee shop or restaurant) in view of other adults. A Responsible Person shall be informed about the appointment or plans in advance.

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

C. Impulsive, secluded or secretive activity, online or in person with children or youth, may foster a high-risk situation, and is therefore to be avoided. See Appendix B — Recommended Practices and Guidelines for Social Media and Electronic Communications.

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

Exceptions may be made for programs intended to teach children or youth about poverty, need, and hunger, such as an intentional fasting program. In these cases, children and youth must agree to participate in writing, and parents or guardians must give written permission that includes certification that the youth or child does not have a medical condition that would put the participant at risk by fasting or missing sleep. Participants who wish to withdraw or who are unable to complete the program must have their basic needs met immediately.

Inclusiveness
No one shall be denied rights, status or access to an equal place in the life, worship, and governance

of any program or activity because of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, differing abilities or socio-economic class. To the extent possible, all spaces and settings for programs, activities and ministry shall be accessible.

The Episcopal Church seeks to support all children and youth by providing reasonable alternative arrangements regardless of state law to address safety and comfort.

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

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

Adults should either have separate shower facilities or shower at other times than the youth. Separate dressing facilities should also be provided. See section on *Overnight Programs*.

Violence and Weapons:

- No one is to strike, hit or otherwise physically threaten or harm anyone at any time.

- Bullying of any kind by anyone is prohibited.

- Children and youth shall not have weapons of any kind at any event or program for children or youth. Exceptions to this restriction may be made for camp programs or other specific programs with prior approval.

- Report suspected violations immediately. See *Suspected Violations of this Policy.*

Behavioral Standards for Adults in Ministry with Children or Youth:
Adults who work with children and youth are expected to model the patterns of healthy relationships that children and youth deserve in all settings. Interactions should meet all requirements outlined above, and adults should be discouraged from initiating a private relationship with any unrelated child or youth from the church away from sanctioned church activities.

DOs
Adults are encouraged to:

1. Have ongoing spiritual practices, which might include: daily prayer, regular participation in corporate worship and Bible study;

2. Spend time with and listen to children and youth, and advocate for their ministry within the Body of Christ;

3. Offer appropriate physical expressions of care, which may include:

    a. high fives and fist bumps;
    b. hand-holding while walking with small children or in prayer;
    c. brief touching of shoulders, hands, or arms;
    d. "laying on of hands" under appropriate pastoral supervision;
    e. brief hugs and arms around shoulders; and

4. Model appropriate affection with other adults and be accountable to the community for behavior.

DON'Ts
Adults shall not under any circumstances:

A. Provide children or youth with non-sacramental alcohol, marijuana, drugs, cigarettes, tobacco products, e-cigarettes, vapes or pornography;

B. Arrive under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs or misused legal drugs at any children's or youth event or when they are responsible for children or youth at an event;

C. Consume non-sacramental alcohol or illegal drugs or misuse legal drugs at any children's or youth event or when they are responsible for children or youth at an event;

D. Engage in illegal behavior or permit other adults or children or youth to engage in illegal behavior;

E. Engage in any sexual, romantic, illicit or secretive relationship or conduct with any child or youth; or

F. Apart from planned pre-approved educational programs, discuss their own sexual activities, fantasies or their own use or abuse of drugs or alcohol with children or youth.

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

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

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

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

1. ***Prior Approvals***

   - Prior approval by the governing body and the member of the clergy in charge is required; and that approval shall be reflected in the minutes of the governing body. Diocesan sponsored programs, trips or events shall receive prior Diocesan approval.

     Written parental approval is required prior to viewing any movie, whether off-site or on-site, rated "PG-13" or above or participating in any conversation or program containing sexually explicit or violent content.
   - These same prior approvals are required when the site is a private residence, hosting such events as cook outs, pool parties, progressive dinners, etc.

2. ***Registration, waiver and release forms***

   A. All children, youth, and adults shall complete and sign a registration form and a waiver and release form before participating in any programs. Confidentially must be preserved with respect to medical and other sensitive information in the forms. Such forms can encompass a program year.

      1. There must be a parent/guardian's signature on all release and waiver forms for minors. Please check with your bishop's office concerning whether digital signatures are acceptable in your state.

      2. Completed release and waiver forms shall be maintained in a secure location on-site or online. Please check with your bishop's office concerning whether such forms may be saved electronically and the length of time the forms must be saved.

   B. Permission slips shall be provided for each off-site event and shall be signed by the parent/guardian.

   C. Prior permission for a minor to be photographed or recorded on film, videotape, audiotape, or other electronic media is required from a parent/guardian.

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

   - Current certification in First Aid, Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation [CPR] and Automated External Defibrillator [AED] is strongly encouraged for those who work with children and youth.

   - A first aid kit, appropriately stocked for the event and participants, shall be available in an easily accessible location.

- A record must be kept for all medication or first aid given to a participant. This record shall include the participant's name, the date and time of service, the name of the person administering medication or treatment, and a description of the medication, dosage and/or treatment given.

- All medications (prescription and over the counter) belonging to minors shall be given to the Responsible Person, unless otherwise agreed upon by the parents and the Responsible Person. Exceptions may include inhalers, Epi-pens and birth-control pills.

- Only the Responsible Person, or their adult designee, shall administer medications.

4. *Supervision*

A. At any gathering of children or youth, there shall be at least two (2) unrelated adults with one being age twenty-five (25) or older, preferably reflecting the sex and gender identity of the participants.

B. Minimum ratios of adult to child/youth shall be in accordance with American Camp Association (ACA) guidelines as follows:

1. Five (5) years & younger — One (1) adult for each five (5) overnight-participants and one (1) adult for each six (6) day-participants

2. Six (6) to eight (8) years — 1:6 for overnight, and 1:8 for day

3. Nine (9) to fourteen (14) years — 1:8 for overnight and 1:10 for day

4. Fifteen (15) to eighteen (18) years — 1:10 for overnight and 1:12 for day

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

D. When you have new leaders-in-training, the leadership teams should also have a reasonable number of experienced adult leaders to provide support.

5. **Insurance**

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

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

- Participant privacy;
- Maximization of social integration of all participants;

- Minimization of stigmatization of any participants;
- Equal opportunity to participate; and
- Safety of all participants.

Other guidelines for overnight programs:

A. The safe use of restrooms and showers by all participants requires Dioceses, congregations and other organizations to consider numerous factors, including, but not limited to: age, sex, gender identity and expression, and privacy. Adults should have separate showers or separate times for showers.

B. Overnight programs shall provide safe, supervised sleeping arrangements.

1. No bed, cot or sleeping bag shall have more than one (1) person sleeping in it.
2. Supervision by two (2) unrelated adults is required in any space where one (1) or more youth are sleeping.
3. It is acceptable for all participants to sleep in the same open area when dressing rooms and bathrooms provide appropriate privacy.

C. Participants shall have access to three (3) substantial meals each full day and access to sufficient water.

D. Participants shall be given the opportunity for at least seven (7) hours of sleep each twenty-four (24) hour period, except for programs where parental/guardian permission is given to miss sleep. In these cases, children and youth must agree to participate in writing, and parents or guardians must give written permission that includes certification that the youth or child does not have a medical condition that would put the participant at risk by missing sleep.

E. Participants shall have some time set aside each day for rest or free time.

Best practice guidelines for hotel stays:

A. One (1) child or youth per bed, including cots, pullouts or hide-a-beds, and rollaway beds;

B. At least two (2) children or two (2) youth in each room.

C. Adult supervisors or chaperones have rooms on the same floor, scattered among the rooms with children or youth and at least one adult room is by the stairs or elevators;

D. Adult leader assigns rooms and room occupants;

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

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

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

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

Camps and Retreat Centers

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

Travel

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

A. Adult Leaders and Chaperones

1. Minimum ratios of adult to youth need to be greater due to the possibility of leaving an adult behind with a participant in the event of a medical emergency.
   a. Nine (9) to fourteen (14) years — 1:5
   b. Fifteen (15) to eighteen (18) years — 1:7

2. Regardless of group size, no group should travel with fewer than three (3) adult chaperones.

3. One (1) adult, minimum age twenty-five (25), should serve as the travel administrator who is responsible for all aspects of the trip, including carrying all necessary documentation, contacts and forms including:

   a. medical releases;
   b. media releases;
   c. community covenant;
   d. emergency contacts;
   e. itineraries; and
   f. cash and/or credit card capacity to address emergencies.

4.   It is a best practice that, one (1) adult, minimum age twenty-five (25), should hold a current medical certification to manage administration of necessary and permissible medications, administer immediate and necessary first aid, and triage medical situations to determine if care of an individual needs to be taken to a higher level of care. When this is not possible, one person should be designated to supervise the administration of medications as instructed on medical release forms, and a clinic near your destination should be identified ahead of time in order to respond to health emergencies as rapidly as possible.

Acceptable medical certifications include:

  a.   Wilderness Medical Response
  b.   Outdoor Emergency Care
  c.   Emergency Medical Technician/Paramedic
  d.   Nurse — RN/LPN/Nurse Practitioner
  e.   Physician's Assistant
  f.   Medical Doctor

5.   Best practice is to designate an adult to serve as back-up to the travel administrator, and as back-up for simple first aid and administration of prescriptions. These could be the same person.

6.   A copy of all documents should be left with an accountable person at the Diocesan, congregation or organization's office. That person should also serve as the local emergency contact person for communications between the traveling group and families at home.

B.   Insurance for Travel

1.   Short-term trip or supplemental insurance, available through most church and organization's policies as an added rider, must be secured at-least one month prior to travel.

2.   It is recommended that all travelers carry evidence of personal health insurance by virtue of a copy of the actual card provided to the insured person.

3.   Because not all individuals have access to affordable and adequate health insurance, it is recommended that health insurance be added to trip insurance.

C.   International Considerations

1.   Check in with the U.S. Department of State on travel requirements, including visas.

2.   Make certain that every traveler's passport is valid for at least six (6) months beyond your return date.

3. Determine whether or not vaccinations are required and/or recommended for entry into specific countries.

4. Arrange to have at least two (2) cell phones with the group that will have active coverage in your destination(s). Make a back-up plan for communication with your responsible person at home.

5. A more thorough list of international travel considerations with links to U.S. and global organizations can be found in the *Youth in Mission Manual* on The Episcopal Church website here: **http://www.episcopalchurch.org/files/7-traveling_7.pdf**

Responding To Concerns

A. Suspected Abuse, Neglect, or Exploitation of Children and Youth

Any adult who has reason to suspect that abuse, neglect or exploitation of children or youth has taken place, is strongly encouraged, and all mandated reporters are required to contact the state's Child Protective Services.

In addition, anyone who has reason to suspect that abuse, neglect or exploitation of children or youth has taken place within a facility or program of the Diocese, congregation or other organization, should immediately inform one (1) or more or the following:

- The bishop or the bishop's office in the case of a Diocese;

- Member of the clergy in charge or the senior warden in the case of a congregation;

- The director, head, or other governing officer in the case of other organizations; and/or

- The Intake Officer in case a member of the clergy is suspected of abuse, neglect and/or exploitation.

B. Suspected Violations of this Policy

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

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

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

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

C. Local Resources for Response

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

- Responsible Person(s) for programs and ministries with children and youth;
- clergy in charge of a congregation;
- wardens;
- bishop;
- Intake Officer(s); and
- Child Protective Services.

Policy Adoption, Implementation and Audit

A. The Episcopal Church Adoption and Implementation

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

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

B. Diocesan Adoption, Implementation, and Audit

Dioceses shall adopt a *Policy for the Protection of Children and Youth* that is consistent with and/or exceeds the requirements in this model policy.

Dioceses may adopt site-specific variations from this model policy, where permitted by their governing body, which shall be described in detail, including the circumstances under which those variations are to be permitted and their rationale. This approval shall be recorded in the minutes of the governing body.

The bishop or ecclesiastical authority for each diocese shall inform congregations and other organizations within the diocese of the contents of the diocesan policy, the requirement that each congregation or organization adopt a policy in accordance with the diocesan policy, and the vendor(s) approved by each diocese to conduct Public Records Checks.

Each diocese is required to conduct a **Safe Church Self-Audit** every three (3) years to confirm compliance with diocesan safe church policies.

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

- existence of a diocesan policy that is consistent with and/or exceeds the requirements of this model policy;
- provision of accessible and appropriate training for all those who work with children and youth in accordance with **Screening and Training Protocols** (Appendix A). Such training shall include, at a minimum, topics identified in this model policy;
- verification that each congregation and/or organization within the diocese has adopted a policy that is consistent with and/or exceeds the diocesan policy; and
- verification that each congregation and/or organization has a process to ensure members access training and conduct public record checks.

C. Congregation and Organization Adoption, Implementation, and Audit

Congregations and Organizations must adopt a **Policy for the Protection of Children and Youth** that is consistent with and/or exceeds the requirements in this model policy and the diocesan policy.

Congregations and Organizations may adopt site-specific variations from diocesan policies, where permitted by vestries or governing bodies, which shall be described in detail, including the circumstances under which those variations are to be permitted and their rationale. This approval shall be recorded in the minutes of the vestry or governing body.

The **Policy for the Protection of Children and Youth** shall be posted in an area where activities take place, and shall be given to all adults, guardians, and all paid and unpaid persons who minister to children or youth. These policies shall include the names and phone numbers of the member of the clergy in charge, the senior warden, and a contact person in the bishop's office.

Each congregation and organization is required to conduct a **Safe Church Self-Audit** annually to confirm compliance with safe church policies, and to report such audit to the bishop's office.

Procedures to be confirmed by audit will include (but are not limited to):
- public record checks, application forms, records of screening and reference verification of paid and unpaid persons;
- records of compliance with **Screening and Training Protocols** (Appendix A);
- procedures for responding to concerns and incidents; and
- evidence of compliance with 'safe space" requirements.

Appendix A — Screening and Training Protocols

Screening and Training Chart	Ministry Function	Public Records	App/Inter/Ref	Universal Training	Leader	Supervisor
Staff & Contracted Ministers (not covered below)	Church Employees	X	X	X		X
	Diocesan contractors (1099)	Depends		X	X	
	Clergy	X	X	X		X
	Church contractors (1099)	Depends		X		
	Diocesan Employees	X	X	X		X
	Diocesan Staff - unpaid	X	X	X		X
Program Supervisors						
	Child/Youth Choir Director	X	X	X		X
	Choir Director	X	X	X		X
	Commissioned Ministry Teams	X	X	X		X
	Director of Religious Education	X	X	X		X
	Camp Director	X	X	X		X
	Youth Minister	X	X	X		X
Program Participants (non-supervisory)						
	Acolyte Mentor	X		X	X	
	Choir parents			X		
	Church School Teacher	X		X	X	
	Counselor in Training	X- 18 and over	X	X	X	
	Nursery Worker - unpaid	X		X	X	
	Parish Nurse	X	X	X		X
	Teenage assistants			X	X	
	Musicians who work with youth	X	X	X		X
*Off-site	Camp Counselor	X	X	X		X
	Confirmation mentors	X	X	X	X	
	Lay Chaplains	X	X	X		X
	Pastoral Care Teams	X	X	X	X	
*Overnight	Youth Group Leaders	X	X	X		X
Drivers	Drivers	DMV		X		
Governance	Church Elected			X	X	
	Treasurer	Criminal & Credit		X	X	
	Vestry			X	X	
	Wardens	Criminal & Credit		X		X
Key Access	Altar Guild	Recommended		X		
	Building Hosts	Recommended		X		
Home Visitors	Eucharistic Visitors	X	X	X	X	
	Home Visitors	X	X	X	X	
	Stephen Ministers	X	X	X	X	
	Church Staff- unpaid	X	X	X		X

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

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

Appendix B — Recommended Practices and Guidelines for Social Media and Electronic Communications for Children and Youth

Social Media & Digital Communications Policy - Children and Youth

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

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

Recommended Practices and Guidelines for Churches and Organizations:
- Establish a policy that outlines professional and institutional standards for profiles and interactions on social networking sites and platforms.

- Establish a policy of transparency regarding Social Media accounts. The best practice is to have the Diocese, congregation or organization create and "own" the Social Media accounts representing the Diocese, congregation or organization respectively and have multiple administrators and/or supervisors with access. If personal accounts are used, a system of monitoring should be established.

- Establish a policy regarding the identification or "tagging" of individuals in online photos or videos. For example, on Facebook, "tagging" someone in a photo or video creates a hyperlink to that person's profile page that can be clicked by anyone. The best practice is for the Diocese, congregation or organization not to identify or "tag" individuals. The "tagging" of children and youth should be prohibited. When written permission is provided by a

parent/guardian, the captioning of photos or videos of minors may be permitted. The caption should not include the minor's full name, nor should it create a clickable link to someone's personal profile. A policy of whether or not an individual can "self-tag" in a Diocese, congregation or organization's online photo or video should also be established.

- A Diocese, congregation or organization does not have a responsibility to review or monitor the personal pages or groups that are not sponsored by that Diocese, congregation or organization, except as described in #2 above. The preceding statement should be included in the Diocese, congregation or organization's Social Media Policy.

- E-mail can be a good method of communication, and it also has the opportunity to be misunderstood. Having a clear understanding and procedure for responding to digital communication that raises concern is prudent for all. Best practices can include not responding immediately and sharing the communication with a supervisor before responding. Phone and face-to-face meetings are preferred when responding to emotionally driven communications or pastoral emergencies.

- When using photos and videos for ministry purposes, obtain a media release for each person and only post images that respect the dignity of every person depicted.

- Dioceses, congregations or organizations must inform participants when they are being videoed because church buildings are not considered public space. Signs should be posted that indicate a service or activity will be broadcast when worship services or activities are streamed or distributed on the web or via other broadcast media.

Recommended Practices and Guidelines for Interactions with Children and Youth:
1. Prudent judgement should be used in the time of day a child or youth is contacted through social media. Under normal circumstances, refrain from contact or exchanging texts, chats, or e-mails before 8:00 am or after 10:00 pm, unless it's an emergency.

2. Privacy settings and personal boundaries should be implemented.
   a. Create and use profiles on social networking sites that meet professional and institutional standards.
   b. Do not submit connection requests (such as friend requests on Facebook or "Add Me" on Snapchat) to children or youth for personal interactions. Youth may not be able to decline such requests due to the disparity of power between youth and adults. Youth may ask to be "friends," and adults should discern the nature of contact appropriate for healthy ministry.
   c. Apply privacy settings that are consistent with all children and youth, across all social networking sites and platforms. Avoid playing favorites or the appearance of playing favorites.

d. Establish a regular ongoing and consistent system of review that focuses on settings, accessible content, photos and videos to ensure compliance with professional and institutional standards.

e. Inform parents of children and youth of social networking sites and platforms used within the ministry.

f. When possible, send communication (1) to entire groups, (2) on an individual's "wall" or (3) in public areas, rather than in private messages. This includes photos, images and videos.

g. When sending emails to a child or youth that contain personal or private information regarding that child or youth, a copy should be sent to the parents or guardians as well. Examples of these types of e-mails include: payment due information, specific medical requests or questions, etc. Mass e-mails sent to an entire group are not required to be copied to parents or guardians.

h. Disclose **ongoing** digital pastoral communications (i.e.: e-mails, Facebook messages, texting, etc.) with children and youth to a parent and/or a supervisor to determine when a referral to a professional provider or resource is needed.

3. Create covenants to govern digital groups, which include:
   a. appropriate and inappropriate behavior of members (bullying, pictures that depict abuse, violence, illegal activities, sexual acts, etc.) and the consequence for inappropriate behavior;
   b. who may join and/or view group activity, when participants should leave the group and when/if the group will be disbanded;
   c. description of content that can be posted or published on the site or page;
   d. a prohibition of "tagging" photos and videos of children and youth. However, the captioning of photos and videos is permissible with written permission from a parent or guardian;
   e. notification that mandatory reporting laws will be followed; and
   f. consequences for breaking the covenant.

4. Delete inappropriate material posted in digital groups, address the behavior and report it, if necessary, in accordance with legal and institutional requirements.

5. In video calls, follow the same criteria used in telephone calls. In addition, prudent judgement regarding attire and surroundings should be observed.

6. Comply with the following best practices regarding "Groups" on Social Networking sites:

   a. Have at least two (2) unrelated adult administrators as well as at least two (2) youth administrators for groups that are designed for youth;
   b. Use closed groups, but not "hidden" or "secret" groups, for youth;
   c. Have only youth administrators invite other youth to join the online group, unless a youth previously asked an adult administrator to invite them to join;

d. Remove any content that shows or describes inappropriate behavior outside the bounds of the established behavioral covenant;
e. Open social networking groups for youth to parents of current members;
f. Remove adult leaders of youth groups and youth who are no longer members, due to departure, removal from position, or are ineligible because they "aged-out" of a program from social networking sites, list serves, etc.;
g. Observe mandated reporting laws regarding suspected abuse, neglect and exploitation.

MODEL POLICY FOR THE PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE ADULTS

This model policy includes the following segments:

- Theological and Ethical Foundations
- Expectations and Local Implementation
- Definitions
- Application and Screening
- Education and Training
- Monitoring and Supervision
- Responding to Concerns
- Policy Adoption, Implementation, and Audit
- Appendix A — Screening and Training Protocols
- Appendix B — Recommended Practices and Guidelines for Social Media and Electronic Communications for Vulnerable Adults

Theological and Ethical Foundations

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

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

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

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

The Church is called to embody and advance God's mission. Ministry is the vocation of the whole community: laypersons, deacons, priests, and bishops who together represent Christ and the Church in the world.

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

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

This document is a statement for The Episcopal Church [TEC], setting forth expectations for its leaders in their relationships with vulnerable people. The purpose of these model policies is to foster the highest standards of behavior in ministry settings. The document includes:
   a. *Screening and Training Protocols* (Appendix A), which explains the level of screening and training required before engaging in ministry with vulnerable adults;
   b. A description of requisite training that is specialized and tailored to ministry role and function;
   c. Behavioral standards designed to ensure that vulnerable adults and all who engage in ministry with them are treated with dignity and respect in all settings;
   d. Social Media and Digital Communications Policy – Vulnerable Adults (Appendix B); which contains recommended Practices and Guidelines for Social Media and Electronic Communications

Expectations and Local Implementation
This model policy sets forth statements of general expectations and guidelines of behavior for ordained and lay people in the church when engaged in ministry with vulnerable adults. This policy is mandated for all such activities sponsored by every congregation, institution, organization, school and agency of each diocese. The purpose of these policies is to create safe and welcoming space for all vulnerable adults and those engaged in ministry with vulnerable adults and to prevent sexual abuse.

This policy is a model and, as such, it presents best practices for creating such safe space. Circumstances in many localities may make some of these best practices difficult to implement or even unworkable. As a result, local entities may make additions or revisions in developing local policy so long as they meet or exceed the requirements of these policies.   This requires that local leadership understand this policy thoroughly enough to make appropriate judgments about local circumstances.

Any such additions or revisions must be submitted in writing for the approval of the Bishop. No provisions may be omitted from a local policy.

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

No policy can foresee every possible circumstance to which it may be applied. Whenever applicable, questions of civil, criminal, and/or ecclesiastical discipline and employment offenses should be addressed with the relevant authorities immediately. Please contact the Office of the Bishop for consultation and resources if assistance is needed.

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

Definitions

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

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

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

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

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

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

Leader: A person who, for the benefit of another, engages in ministry without responsibility for oversight of other adults engaged in that same ministry. Examples include: Eucharistic Visitors and members of pastoral care teams.

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

Mandated Reporter: A person who is required by state law to report reasonable suspicions of abuse, neglect and/or exploitation of vulnerable populations to the appropriate state agency. State laws vary greatly. Generally, state law mandates that either all adults or adults in certain professions report suspected abuse of elders, vulnerable and/or dependent adults. It is imperative to know the requirements of applicable state laws. Typically, individuals who are not mandated to report suspicion of abuse may make a report to the appropriate state agency, even though not legally required to do so.

Off-site: Any location other than the sponsoring Episcopal church or institutional facility or campus.

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

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

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

Programs: Official activities and Programs sponsored by the Episcopal Church and its provinces, dioceses and congregations.

Public Record Check: A search of documents and data available to the public including criminal and civil court records, credit reports, and driving records from the department of motor vehicles. Typically, such searches are conduct by a third party with expertise in this area.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- **Universal Training:** A standard of training that will foster a culture of safety and inclusion for all people that includes a broad overview of issues of vulnerability, power, and healthy

boundaries. This training is designed to equip all people to live out their Baptismal Covenant.

- **Specialized Training**: A standard of additional training that equips people who participate in or have oversight responsibility for ministries. In addition to Universal Training, a person will have access to training that is specialized and tailored to their role and ministry function.

Vulnerable Adult:

a. any adult at or older than the age designated as an elder by applicable state law;
b. any adult who is infirm or diminished in capacity due to age, illness or disability;
c. any adult who is ministered to in their home (by Eucharistic Visitors, Pastoral Care Visitors, Stephen Ministers, or others);
d. any adult who is wholly or partially dependent upon one (1) or more other persons for emotional, psychological or physical care or support, such dependency may be temporary as in the case of an accident, illness, or birth of a child; and
e. any adult who by virtue of a crisis, experiences vulnerability leading to dependency on another or lacks agency in a pastoral relationship as in the wake of death of a family member or job loss.

Application and Screening

Dioceses, congregations and other organizations are required to screen all persons according to the standards in the *Screening and Training Protocols* (Appendix A). For some positions, screening consists only of a Public Records Check. For other positions there are additional screening requirements of a written application, interview and reference verification.

A. Public Records Checks

1. Congregations and other Organizations shall use a provider approved by the diocese to conduct public records checks. Such checks must be completed before the employee or volunteer begins programmatic interaction with vulnerable adults;

2. Criminal public records checks shall include all available criminal records and sex offender registries;

3. A Department of Motor Vehicles [DMV] records check is needed if transporting vulnerable adults as part of, or an extension of, ministry of the church or for a church-sponsored event;

4. A credit check is required of treasurers and those with check signing authority; and

5. Public records checks must be updated at least every five (5) years.

B. Written application, interview and reference verification are required before serving in certain roles and ministries as specified in the *Screening and Training Protocols* (Appendix A). Where required, these components are generally conducted in the following order:

1. Submission of a completed written application to serve in a specified role with a clearly defined written "job description." The application includes verifiable personal information;

2. Personal interview;

3. Reference verification conducted by congregations and other organizations to verify personal information and check references listed in the application (people who know but are not related to the applicant); and

4. Maintenance of these records as described below.

Potential leaders or supervisors must be known and active in the congregation for at least six (6) months before engaging in ministry with vulnerable adults unless they are required to have public records checks and reference checks pursuant to the *Screening and Training Protocols* (Appendix A).

Dioceses, congregations and other organizations must keep and maintain all application and screening records secure and confidential in the Diocese, church or organization's office. This includes a signature by each applicant verifying receipt of a copy of this policy, including any local procedures or variations.

Education and Training

Training shall be appropriate to each person's function according to the *Screening and Training Protocols* (Appendix A).

All Leaders shall have Universal Training that fosters a culture of safety and inclusion for all people and covers a broad overview of issues of vulnerability, power, and healthy boundaries. Universal Training is designed to equip all people to live out their Baptismal Covenant. All members of the Episcopal Church shall have access to this training.

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

Depending on role and responsibility, Specialized Training should include:
  a. the prevention, identification and response to all forms of abuse and neglect including financial exploitation;
  b. mandated and voluntary reporting of suspected abuse, neglect and exploitation of vulnerable adults;
  c. vulnerability within the pastoral relationship;
  d. an introduction to gender non-binary;
  e. the needs of aging LGBTQ+ individuals who often struggle to find care or residential facilities adequately equipped to meet their needs; and
  f. the ways that vulnerable adults can engage in self-advocacy.

Certification of training shall be renewed every three (3) years.

Dioceses, congregations and other organizations with responsibility for programs with, or services or ministries to vulnerable adults shall keep records sufficient to evidence compliance with this policy.

Monitoring and Supervision of Programs

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

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

Dioceses, congregations and organizations shall maintain an up-to-date list of persons with their contact information approved to minister to vulnerable adults and/or engage in pastoral relationships with others. This list shall be kept in the organization's office or other place where records are kept. It is best practice for those ministering to vulnerable adults to document their visits, including time, place and any observations or concerns. Such documentation is reviewed by the Supervisor. Confidentiality among clergy and lay ministers is required and all documentation is kept confidential. This documentation promotes continuity of care and transparency in ministry.

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

A. Presence of Unrelated Adults Suggested

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

If a Diocese, congregation, or organization's policy requires that there be two (2) unrelated adults present and if circumstances result in a minister being alone with a vulnerable adult, that minister shall report this to the Supervisor, clergy, senior warden or Responsible Person as soon as possible.

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

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

      A. Be in places where casual monitoring by others is convenient; and

      B. Convey safety and comfort.

C. Inclusiveness

No one shall be denied rights, status or access to an equal place in the life, worship, and governance of any program or activity because of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, differing abilities, socio-economic class or age. To the extent possible, all spaces and settings for programs, activities and ministry shall be accessible. The Episcopal Church seeks to support all persons by providing reasonable alternative arrangements regardless of state law to address safety and comfort.

Transgender, genderqueer, or gender non-binary adults who express the need or desire for increased privacy should be provided with reasonable alternative arrangements. Reasonable alternative arrangements may include the use of a private area, or a separate changing schedule, or use of a single-stall restroom. Any alternative arrangement should be provided in a way that protects the adult's ability to keep their transgender status confidential, if they so desire.

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

D. Violence

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

E. Behavioral Standards for Ministry with Vulnerable Adults

All who work with vulnerable adults are expected to model the patterns of healthy relationships. To this end, lay and ordained ministers working with vulnerable adults shall:
   a. Take care not to unduly influence a person to whom they minister;
   b. Accept only token gifts from those to whom they minister. Ministers given gifts shall report those gifts in writing to their Supervisor, clergy, senior warden, or Responsible Person;
   c. Decline to accept loans of any kind from those to whom they minister;
   d. Decline to agree to be named as a beneficiary or to act as an administrator or executor in a will of anyone to whom they minister; and
   e. Inform Supervisor, clergy, senior warden, or Responsible Person of anything that causes concern for the safety or wellbeing of those to whom they minister.

DO's

All who minister to vulnerable adults are encouraged to:

    a. have ongoing spiritual practices, which might include daily prayer, regular participation in corporate worship and Bible study;

    b. spend time with and listen to vulnerable adults, and advocate for their ministry within the Body of Christ;

    c. offer appropriate physical expressions of affection, as long as they are welcomed by the recipient. These may include:

        1. brief hugs;

        2. pats on the shoulder or back;

        3. kisses on the cheek;

        4. handshakes;

        5. holding hands during prayer; and

    d. maintain healthy boundaries when sharing personal information.

DON'Ts

Adults shall not under any circumstances:

    a. provide vulnerable adults with non-sacramental alcohol, marijuana, illegal drugs, cigarettes, e-cigarettes, vapes, or pornography;

    b. arrive under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or misuse of legal drugs when they are responsible for or ministering to a vulnerable adult;

    c. consume non-sacramental alcohol or illegal drugs or misuse legal drugs when they are responsible for or ministering to a vulnerable adult;

    d. engage in illegal behavior or permit others to engage in illegal behavior; or

    e. engage in any sexual, romantic, illicit or secretive relationship or conduct with any vulnerable adult.

F.   Visits to Private Residences

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

- Avoid situations that might compromise privacy; common examples include:
  - Visiting behind closed bedroom doors;
  - Sitting on the bed of the person being visited; or
  - Visiting a person while they are not fully clothed.

- The best practice is to visit in teams of two (2) or more. If it is not possible for another adult minister to be present, a member of the vulnerable adult's household should be present. If neither is possible, documentation of the time, duration of visit, general matters discussed, and any pastoral concerns shall be provided to the Supervisor as soon as possible after the visit.

G. Visits to Residential Facilities

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

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

H. Off-site Visits, Events, and Programs

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

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

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

5. *Prior Approvals*

- Prior approval by the governing body and the member of the clergy in charge is required; and that approval shall be reflected in the minutes of the governing body. Diocesan sponsored programs, trips or events shall receive prior Diocesan approval.

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

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

2. Registration, Waivers, and Release Forms
Due to the unique risks of off-site visits, events and programs that cannot always be anticipated, it is important to obtain permissions and manage documentation as described below.
A. All participants shall complete and sign a registration, waiver and release before participating in any program. Confidentiality must be preserved with respect to medical information.

1. There must be a signature on all release and waiver forms. If a person is unable to consent due to impairment or lack of agency then the signature of that person's guardian, spouse or other trusted family member is required. Applicable state law determines whether digital signatures are acceptable.
2. Completed release and waiver forms shall be maintained in a secure location on-site. Check with the bishop's office regarding whether such forms may be saved electronically and how long they must be retained.

B. Permission slips shall be provided for each event and shall be signed by the vulnerable adult, guardian, spouse, or other trusted family member.

C. Prior permission for an individual to be photographed or recorded on film, videotape, audiotape, or other electronic media is required.

3. First Aid and Medications

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

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

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

I. Transportation
For the health and safety of all participants, the following practices shall be followed:
   a. For events that originate and/or terminate at the Diocesan, congregation or organization's facility, all drivers must be at least twenty-one (21) years of age and provide proof of insurance and a current driver's license, a completed volunteer driver information form, and have a satisfactory DMV records check;
   b. A list of those approved to provide transportation to vulnerable adults shall be maintained in the office of the organization;
   c. Anyone being transported must consent to such transportation beforehand. If a person is unable to consent due to impairment or lack of agency then prior approval by that person's guardian, spouse or other trusted family member is required; and
   d. All drivers and riders must comply with state laws including seat belt and cell phone usage.

J. Insurance for Overseas Pilgrimages and Mission Trips
   a. Short-term trip or supplemental insurance, available through most church and organization's policies as an added rider, must be secured at-least one month prior to travel.

b. It is recommended that all travelers carry evidence of personal health insurance by virtue of a copy of the actual card provided to the insured person.

c. Because not all individuals have access to affordable and adequate health insurance, it is recommended that health insurance be added to trip insurance.

K. International Considerations

1. Check in with the U.S. Department of State on travel requirements, including visas.

2. Make certain that every traveler's passport is valid for at least six (6) months beyond your return date.

3. Determine whether or not vaccinations are required and/or recommended for entry into specific countries.

4. Arrange to have at least two (2) cell phones with the group that will have active coverage in your destination(s). Make a back-up plan for communication with your responsible person at home.

L. Conference and Retreat Centers

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

Responding To Concerns

A. Suspected Abuse, Neglect, or Exploitation of a Vulnerable Adult

Anyone who has reason to suspect that abuse, neglect or exploitation of a vulnerable adult has taken place, is strongly encouraged, and all mandated reporters are required to contact the state's Adult Protective Services.

In addition, anyone who has reason to suspect that abuse, neglect or exploitation of a vulnerable adult has taken place within a facility or program of the Diocese, congregation or other organization, should immediately inform one (1) or more or the following:

• The bishop or the bishop's office in the case of a Diocese;

• Member of the clergy in charge or the senior warden in the case of a congregation;

• The director, head, or other governing officer in the case of other organizations; and/or

• The Intake Officer in case a member of the clergy is suspected of abuse, neglect and/or exploitation.

B. Suspected Violations of this Policy

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

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

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

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

C. Local Resources for Response

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

- Responsible Person(s) for programs and ministries with vulnerable adults;
- clergy in charge of a congregation;
- wardens;
- bishop;
- Intake Officer(s); and
- Adult Protective Services.

Policy Adoption, Implementation and Audit

A. The Episcopal Church Adoption and Implementation

The Episcopal Church shall ensure that all programs and events of The Episcopal Church involving vulnerable adults comply with the standards set out in this model policy.
The Episcopal Church shall also ensure that each diocese adopts a *Policy for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults* in accordance with this model policy by January 1, 2019.

B. Diocesan Adoption, Implementation, and Audit

Dioceses shall adopt a *Policy for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults* that is consistent with and/or exceeds the requirements in this model policy.

Dioceses may adopt site-specific variations from this model policy, where permitted by their governing body, which shall be described in detail, including the circumstances under which those variations are to be permitted and their rationale. This approval shall be recorded in the minutes of the governing body.

The bishop or ecclesiastical authority for each diocese shall inform congregations and other organizations within the diocese of the contents of the diocesan policy, the requirement that each congregation or organization adopt a policy in accordance with the diocesan policy, and the vendor(s) approved by each diocese to conduct Public Records Checks.

Each diocese is required to conduct a *Safe Church Self-Audit* every three (3) years to confirm compliance with diocesan safe church policies.

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

- existence of diocesan policy that is consistent with and/or exceeds the requirements of this model policy;
- provision of accessible and appropriate training for all those who work with vulnerable adults in accordance with *Screening and Training Protocols* (Appendix A). Such training shall include, at a minimum, topics identified in this model policy;
- verification that each congregation and/or organization within the diocese has adopted a policy that is consistent with and/or exceeds the diocesan policy; and
- verification that each congregation and/or organization has a process to ensure members access training and conduct public record checks.

C. Congregation and Organization Adoption, Implementation, and Audit

Congregations and Organizations must adopt a *Policy for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults that* is consistent with and/or exceeds the requirements in this model policy and the diocesan policy.

Congregations and organizations may adopt site-specific variations from diocesan policies, where permitted by vestries or governing bodies, which shall be described in detail, including the circumstances under which those variations are to be permitted and their rationale. This approval shall be recorded in the minutes of the vestry or governing body.

The *Policy for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults* shall be posted in an area where activities take place, and shall be given to all adults, guardians, and all paid and unpaid persons who minister to vulnerable adults. These policies shall include the names and phone numbers of the member of the clergy in charge, the senior warden, and a contact person in the bishop's office.

Each congregation and organization is required to conduct a *Safe Church Self-Audit* annually to confirm compliance with safe church policies, and to report such audit to the bishop's office.

Procedures to be confirmed by audit will include (but are not limited to):
- public record checks, application forms, records of screening and reference verification of paid and unpaid persons engaged in ministry with vulnerable adults;

- records of compliance with *Screening and Training Protocols* (Appendix A);
- procedures for responding to concerns and incidents; and
- evidence of compliance with 'safe space" requirements.

Appendix A — Screening and Training Protocols

Screening and Training Chart	Ministry Function	Public Records	App/Inter/Ref	Universal Training	Leader	Supervisor
Staff & Contracted Ministers (not covered below)	Church Employees	X	X	X		X
	Diocesan contractors (1099)	Depends		X	X	
	Clergy	X	X	X		X
	Church contractors (1099)	Depends		X		
	Diocesan Employees	X	X	X		X
	Diocesan Staff - unpaid	X	X	X		X
Program Supervisors						
	Child/Youth Choir Director	X	X	X		X
	Choir Director	X	X	X		X
	Commissioned Ministry Teams	X	X	X		X
	Director of Religious Education	X	X	X		X
	Camp Director	X	X	X		X
	Youth Minister	X	X	X		X
Program Participants (non-supervisory)						
	Acolyte Mentor	X		X	X	
	Choir parents			X		
	Church School Teacher	X		X	X	
	Counselor in Training	X- 18 and over	X	X	X	
	Nursery Worker - unpaid	X		X	X	
	Parish Nurse	X	X	X		X
	Teenage assistants			X	X	
	Musicians who work with youth	X	X	X		X
*Off-site	Camp Counselor	X	X	X		X
	Confirmation mentors	X	X	X	X	
	Lay Chaplains	X	X	X		X
	Pastoral Care Teams	X	X	X	X	
*Overnight	Youth Group Leaders	X	X	X		X
Drivers	Drivers	DMV		X		
Governance	Church Elected			X	X	
	Treasurer	Criminal & Credit		X	X	
	Vestry			X	X	
	Wardens	Criminal & Credit		X		X
Key Access	Altar Guild	Recommended		X		
	Building Hosts	Recommended		X		
Home Visitors	Eucharistic Visitors	X	X	X	X	
	Home Visitors	X	X	X	X	
	Stephen Ministers	X	X	X	X	
	Church Staff- unpaid	X	X	X		X

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

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

Appendix B — Recommended Practices and Guidelines for Social Media and Electronic Communications for Vulnerable Adults

Social Media & Digital Communications Policy - Vulnerable Adults

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

General Information about Digital Communications

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

Recommended Practices and Guidelines for Churches and Organizations:

1. Establish a policy that outlines professional and institutional standards for profiles and interactions on social networking sites and platforms.

2. Establish a policy of transparency regarding Social Media accounts. The best practice is to have the Diocese, congregation or organization create and "own" the Social Media accounts representing the Diocese, congregation or organization respectively and have multiple administrators and/or supervisors with access. If personal accounts are used, a system of monitoring should be established.

3. Establish a policy regarding the identification or "tagging" of individuals in online photos. For example, on Facebook, "tagging" someone in a photo or video creates a hyperlink to that person's profile page that can be clicked by anyone. The best practice is for the Diocese,

congregation or Organization not to identify or "tag" individuals. The "tagging" of vulnerable adults should be discouraged. The captioning of photos or videos may be permitted when written permission is provided by a vulnerable adult (or the person's guardian, spouse or other trusted family member when the vulnerable adult is unable to consent due to impairment or lack of agency). The caption should not include the individual's full name, nor should it create a clickable link to someone's personal profile. A policy of whether or not an individual can "self-tag" in a Diocese, congregation or organization's online photo should also be established.

4. A Diocese, congregation or organization does not have a responsibility to review or monitor the personal pages or groups that are not sponsored by the Diocese, congregation or organization respectively, except as described in #2 above. The preceding statement should be included in the Diocese, congregation or organization's Social Media Policy.

5. E-mail can be a good method of communication, and it also has the opportunity to be misunderstood. Having a clear understanding and procedure when responding to digital communication that raises concern is prudent for all. Best practices can include not responding immediately and sharing the communication with a supervisor before responding. Phone and face-to-face meetings are preferred when responding to emotionally driven communications or pastoral emergencies.

6. When using photos and videos for ministry purposes, obtain a media release for each person and only post images that respect the dignity of every person depicted.

7. Dioceses, congregations or organizations must inform participants when they are being videoed because church buildings are not considered public space. Signs should be posted that indicate a service or activity will be broadcast when worship services or activities are streamed or distributed on the web or via other broadcast media.

Recommended Practices and Guidelines for Vulnerable Adults:

1. Prudent judgement should be used in the time of day a vulnerable adult is contacted through social media. Under normal circumstances, refrain from contact or exchanging texts, chats, or e-mails before 8:00 am or after 10:00 pm, unless it's an emergency.

2. Privacy settings and personal boundaries should be implemented.

   a. Create and use profiles on social networking sites that meet professional and institutional standards.
   b. Apply privacy settings that are consistent with all vulnerable adults, across all social networking sites and platforms. Avoid playing favorites or the appearance of playing favorites.
   c. Establish a regular ongoing and consistent system of review that focuses on settings, accessible content and photos and videos to ensure compliance with professional and institutional standards.

d. When possible, send communication (1) to entire groups, (2) on an individual's "wall" or (3) in public areas, rather than in private messages. This includes photos, images and videos.

e. Disclose **ongoing** digital pastoral communications (i.e.: e-mails, Facebook messages, texting, etc.) with a vulnerable adult to a supervisor to determine when a referral to a professional provider or resources is needed.

3. Create covenants to govern digital groups, which include:

   a. appropriate and inappropriate behavior of members (bullying, pictures that depict abuse, violence, illegal activities, sexual acts, etc.) and the consequence for inappropriate behavior;

   b. who may join and/or view group activity, when participants should leave the group and when/if the group will be disbanded;

   c. description of content that can be posted or published on the site or page;

   d. discourage "tagging" photos and videos of vulnerable adults. However, the captioning of photos and videos is permissible with appropriate written permission as described above;

   e. notification that mandatory reporting laws will be followed; and

   f. consequences for breaking the covenant.

4. Delete inappropriate material posted in digital groups, address the behavior and report, if necessary, in accordance with legal and institutional requirements.

5. In video calls, follow the same criteria used in telephone calls. In addition, prudent judgement regarding attire and surroundings should be observed.

6. Comply with the following best practices regarding "Groups" on Social Networking sites:

   a. Have at least two (2) unrelated administrators.

   b. Use closed groups, but not "hidden" or "secret" groups, for vulnerable adults;

   c. Remove any content that shows or describes inappropriate behavior outside the bounds of the established behavioral covenant; and

   d. Observe mandated reporting laws regarding suspected abuse, neglect and exploitation.