



St. Timothy's Episcopal Church

SAFE CHURCH POLICY FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Adopted: March 2022



I. APPLICATION AND SCREENING

The Diocese of Iowa, 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.

a. Public Records Checks

- Congregations and other organizations shall use a provider approved by the diocese to conduct public records checks ([Appendix F](#)). Such checks must be completed before the employee or volunteer begins interacting with children and youth.
- Criminal public records checks shall include all available criminal records and sex offender registries;
- As a part of, or an extension of, diocesan events, ministry of the church or for a church sponsored event, all drivers must be at least 21 years of age and provide proof of insurance and a current driver's license; and
- Public records checks must be updated at least every five years.

b. Additional Screening Requirements

Written application, interview, and reference verification may be required before serving in certain roles and ministries. Where required, these components are generally conducted in the following order:

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

Potential Leaders or Supervisors must be known and active in the congregation for at least six 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](#)). Some ministries at St. Timothy's are by invitation of the Rector only and are under the supervision of the Rector.

The Diocese of Iowa, 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 statement by each applicant verifying receipt of a copy of this policy ([Appendix E](#)), including any local procedures or variations.

II. 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:

- 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 years.

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

III. 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 responsibility of the ministry with the person engaged in the ministry. Each person engaged in such ministry should know who supervises their ministry and how to contact the Supervisor at all times.

The Diocese of Iowa, 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.

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

A. Unrelated Adults Required

At any gathering of children or youth, there shall be at least two adults with one being age 25 or older (the second adult needs to be at least two years older than the eldest participant), preferably reflecting the sex and gender identity of the participants. Adults should be present at ministry settings and events designed for children and youth. If unanticipated circumstances result in an adult being alone with children or youth, that adult shall report those circumstances to the Supervisor, clergy in charge, senior warden, or Responsible Person as soon as possible.

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

B. Creating Safe Space for Children and Youth

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

For example:

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

- **Computers and electronic devices.** Children and youth shall have adequate supervision when using electronic devices belonging to the diocese, congregations, and other organizations. Devices shall have adequate password protection. Each user shall have their own account and password. See *Recommended Practices and Guidelines for Social Media and Electronic Communications* ([Appendix B](#)) and St. Timothy's Social Media policy.
- **Persons with keys and access to locked spaces.** *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](#)).
- **Unused spaces.** Spaces not in use should not be readily accessible

C. One-to-One Conversations with Children or Youth

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

Examples include:

- Planned or unplanned on-site conversations can take place in a public location, away from where others can hear but in view of other adults.
- Planned off-site conversations/meetings can take place in a public place (such as a coffee shop or restaurant) in view of other adults. A Responsible Person shall be informed about the appointment or plans in advance.

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

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

D. Basic Needs

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

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

E. Inclusiveness

No one shall be denied rights, status or access to an equal place in the life, worship, and governance of any program or activity because of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, differing abilities, or socio-economic class. To the extent possible, 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 the 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*** ([Section VI, I](#)).

F. 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.
- No persons shall have firearms with them at any event or program for children or youth.
- Report suspected violations immediately. See ***Suspected Violations of this Policy*** ([Section VII, B](#)).

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

Adults who work with children and youth are expected to model the patterns of healthy relationships that children and youth deserve in all settings. Being aware of your surroundings and audience at all times is crucial. 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

DOs

Adults are encouraged to:

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

DON'Ts

Adults shall not under any circumstances:

- Provide children or youth with non-sacramental alcohol, marijuana, drugs, cigarettes, tobacco products, e-cigarettes, vapes, or pornography;
- Arrive under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or misused legal drugs at any children’s or youth event or when they are responsible for children or youth at an event;
- Consume non-sacramental alcohol or illegal drugs or misuse legal drugs at any children’s or youth event or when they are responsible for children or youth at an event;
- Engage in illegal behavior or permit other adults or children or youth to engage in illegal behavior;
- Engage in any sexual, romantic, illicit, or secretive relationship or conduct with any child or youth; or
- Apart from planned pre-approved educational programs, discuss or joke about their own sexual activities, fantasies, or their own use, or abuse of drugs or alcohol with children or youth.

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

H. Special Considerations for Off-Site Programming

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

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

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

1. Prior Approvals

- Diocesan sponsored programs, trips, or events shall receive prior diocesan approval.
- Written parental approval (via consent form, email, or text would be acceptable) is required prior to viewing any movie, whether off-site or on-site, rated "PG-13" or above, or participating in any conversation or program containing sexually explicit or violent content.
- These same prior approvals are required when the site is a private residence, hosting such events as cook outs, pool parties, progressive dinners, etc.

2. Registration, Waiver, and Release Forms

- All children, youth, and adults shall complete and sign a registration form and a waiver and release form before participating in any programs. A permission form is part of the Christian Formation registration form required for all youth taking part in programming at St. Timothy's. Confidentiality must be preserved with respect to medical and other sensitive information in the forms. Such forms can encompass a program year.
 - There must be a parent/guardian's signature on all release and waiver forms for minors. Digital signatures are acceptable.
 - Completed release and waiver forms shall be maintained in a secure location on-site or online. Please check with the bishop's office concerning whether such forms may be saved electronically and the length of time the forms must be saved.
- Permission slips shall be provided for each off-site event and shall be signed by the parent/guardian.
- Prior permission for a minor to be photographed or recorded on film, videotape, audiotape, or other electronic media is required from a parent/guardian.

3. First Aid and Medications

- Current certification in First Aid, CPR, and Automated External Defibrillator (AED) is strongly encouraged for those who work with children and youth.
- A first aid kit, appropriately stocked for the event and participants, shall be available in an easily accessible location.
- A record must be kept for all medication or first aid given to a participant. This record shall include the participant's name, the date and time of service, the name of the person administering medication or treatment, and a description of the medication, dosage, and/or treatment given.
- All medications (prescription and over the counter) belonging to minors shall be given to the Responsible Person, unless otherwise agreed upon by the parents and the Responsible Person. Exceptions may include inhalers, epi-pens, and birth-control pills.
- Only the Responsible Person, or their adult designee, shall administer medications. Exceptions may include inhalers, epi-pens, and birth-control pills.

4. Supervision

- At any gathering of children or youth, there shall be at least two adults with one being age 25 or older (the second adult needs to be at least two years older than the eldest participant), preferably reflecting the sex and gender identity of the participants. Adults should be 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.
- Minimum ratios of adult to child/youth shall be in accordance with American Camp Association (ACA) guidelines as follows:
 - 5 years & younger** — 1 adult for each 5 overnight-participants and 1 adult for each 6 day-participants
 - 6–8 years** — 1:6 for overnight, and 1:8 for day
 - 9–14 years** — 1:8 for overnight and 1:10 for day
 - 15–18 years** — 1:10 for overnight and 1:12 for day
- Additional adults can provide skills, mentorship, support, encouragement, spiritual guidance, and joy.
- When you have new leaders-in-training, the leadership teams should also have a reasonable number of experienced adult leaders to provide support.

Insurance

All trips to off-site destinations must have adequate insurance in case of emergency. St. Timothy's will follow guidance provided by insurance broker.

I. Overnight Programs

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

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

Other guidelines for overnight programs:

- The safe use of restrooms and showers by all participants requires the Diocese of Iowa, 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.
- Overnight programs shall provide safe, supervised sleeping arrangements.
 - One child or youth per bed, including cots, pullouts or hide-a-beds, and rollaway beds; unless there is written consent from parents.
 - Supervision by two unrelated adults is required in any space where one or more youth are sleeping except when a family is sharing a room.
 - It is acceptable for all participants to sleep in the same open area when dressing rooms and bathrooms provide appropriate privacy.
 - Sleeping arrangements will be approved by parents/guardians prior to the event.
- Participants shall have access to three substantial meals each full day and access to sufficient water.
- Participants shall be given the opportunity for at least seven hours of sleep each 24-hour period, except for programs where parental/guardian permission is given to miss sleep. In these cases, children and youth must agree to participate in writing, and parents or guardians must give written permission that includes certification that the youth or child does not have a medical condition that would put the participant at risk by missing sleep.
- Participants shall have some time set aside each day for rest or free time.

Best practice guidelines for hotel stays:

- One child or youth per bed, including cots, pullouts or hide-a-beds, and rollaway beds; unless there is written consent from parents.
- At least 2 children or 2 youth in each room.
- Adult supervisors or chaperones have rooms on the same floor, scattered among the rooms with children or youth, and at least one adult room is by the stairs or elevators;
- Adult leader assigns rooms and room occupants;

J. Transportation

- For the health and safety of all participants, the following practices shall be followed:
- For events that originate and/or terminate at the diocesan office, congregation, or organization's facility, all drivers must be at least 21 years of age and provide proof of insurance and a current driver's license.
All drivers and riders must comply with state laws including seat belt and cell phone usage.
- Parents/guardians are responsible for the transportation and safety of their children and/or youth to and from the event. This responsibility includes the transportation of any other passengers in their vehicle.
- Parents/guardians complete written permission forms before Responsible Person(s) transport children and youth for a diocesan sponsored activity or for any purpose on more than an occasional basis.

K. Camps and Retreat Centers

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

L. Travel

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

1. Adult Leaders and Chaperones

- Minimum ratios of adult to youth need to be greater due to the possibility of leaving an adult behind with a participant in the event of a medical emergency.
 - **9–14 years** — 1:5
 - **15–18 years** — 1:7
- Regardless of group size, no group should travel with fewer than three adult chaperones.
- One adult, minimum age 25, should serve as the travel administrator who is responsible for all aspects of the trip, including carrying all necessary documentation, contacts, and forms including:
 - medical releases;
 - community covenant;
 - emergency contacts;
 - itineraries; and
 - cash and/or credit card capacity to address emergencies.
- It is a best practice that, one adult, minimum age 25, should hold a current medical certification 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:
 - Wilderness Medical Response
 - Outdoor Emergency Care
 - Emergency Medical Technician/Paramedic
 - Nurse — RN/LPN/Nurse Practitioner
 - Physician’s Assistant
 - Medical Doctor
- Best practice is to designate an adult to serve as back-up to the travel administrator, and as back-up for simple first aid and administration of prescriptions. These could be the same person.
- A copy of all documents should be left with an accountable person at the diocesan, congregation, or organizations’ office. That person should also serve as the local emergency contact person for communications between the traveling group and families at home.

2. Insurance for Travel

- Short-term trip or supplemental insurance, available through most church and organization's policies as an added rider, must be secured at-least one month prior to travel.
- It is recommended that all travelers carry evidence of personal health insurance by virtue of a copy of the actual card provided to the insured person.
- Because not all individuals have access to affordable and adequate health insurance, it is recommended that health insurance be added to trip insurance.

3. International Considerations

- Check in with the U.S. Department of State on travel requirements, including visas.
- Make certain that every traveler's passport is valid for at least six months beyond your return date.
- Determine whether or not vaccinations are required and/or recommended for entry into specific countries.
- Arrange to have at least two cell phones with the group that will have active coverage in your destination(s). Make a back-up plan for communication with your Responsible Person at home.
- A more thorough list of international travel considerations with links to U.S. and global organizations can be found in the *Youth in Mission Manual* here: http://www.episcopalchurch.org/files/7-traveling_7.pdf

IV. 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 of more or the following:

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

B. Suspected Violations of this Policy

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

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

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

The Diocese of Iowa, congregations or organizations shall have available a list of 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 diocesan programs and ministries with children and youth;
- Clergy in charge of a congregation;
- Wardens;
- Bishop;
- Intake Officer(s); and
- Child Protective Services.

V. POLICY ADOPTION, IMPLEMENTATION, AND AUDIT

A. Diocesan Adoption, Implementation, and Audit

The bishop or ecclesiastical authority for the diocese shall inform congregations and other organizations within the diocese of the contents of this 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.

The Diocese of Iowa shall conduct a **Safe Church Self-Audit** every three 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 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.

B. 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 records checks, application forms, records of screening and reference verification of paid and unpaid persons;
- Records of compliance with **Screening and Training Protocols** ([Appendix A](#));
- Procedures for responding to concerns and incidents; and
- Evidence of compliance with “safe space” requirements.

Appendix A: Screening and Training Protocol

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 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 (email, social networking sites or platforms, notes, texts, or posts, etc.) are NOT CONFIDENTIAL and can be shared or reposted to others.
- Interactions in the virtual world need to be transparent; that is, occurring in such a way that it is easy for others to see what actions are performed.
- In the virtual world, healthy boundaries and safe church practices must be adhered to as they are in the physical world.
- In the virtual world, “friend” can mean anyone with whom you are willing to communicate through that medium. In the physical world, friend can mean much more in terms of intimacy, self-disclosure, mutuality, and expectations for relationship.
- Laws regarding mandated reporting of suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation of children or youth apply in the virtual world as they do in the physical world. 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.
- Email can be a good method of communication, and it also has the opportunity to be misunderstood. Having a clear understanding and procedure for responding to digital communication that raises concern is prudent for all. Best practices can include not responding immediately and sharing the communication with a supervisor before responding. Phone and face-to-face meetings are preferred when responding to emotionally driven communications or pastoral emergencies.
- When using photos and videos for ministry purposes, obtain a media release for each person and only post images that respect the dignity of every person depicted.
- Dioceses, congregations, or organizations must inform participants when they are being videoed because church buildings are not considered public space. Signs should be posted that indicate a service or activity will be broadcast when worship services or activities are streamed or distributed on the web or via other broadcast media.

Recommended Practices and Guidelines for Interactions with Children and Youth:

- 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 emails before 8:00 am or after 10:00 pm, unless it’s an emergency.
- Privacy settings and personal boundaries should be implemented.
 - Create and use profiles on social networking sites that meet professional and institutional standards.
 - Do not submit connection requests (such as friend requests on Facebook or “Add Me” on Snapchat) to children or youth for personal interactions. Youth may not be able to decline such requests due to the disparity of power between youth and adults. Youth may ask to be “friends,” and adults should discern the nature of contact appropriate for healthy ministry.

- Apply privacy settings that are consistent with all children and youth, across all social networking sites and platforms. Avoid playing favorites or the appearance of playing favorites.
- Establish a regular ongoing and consistent system of review that focuses on settings, accessible content, photos, and videos to ensure compliance with professional and institutional standards.
- Inform parents of children and youth of social networking sites and platforms used within the ministry.
- When possible, send communication (1) to entire groups, (2) on an individual's "wall," or (3) in public areas, rather than in private messages. This includes photos, images and videos.
- When sending emails to a child or youth that contain personal or private information regarding that child or youth, a copy should be sent to the parents or guardians as well. Examples of these types of emails include: payment due information, specific medical requests or questions, etc. Mass emails sent to an entire group are not required to be copied to parents or guardians.
- Disclose **ongoing** digital pastoral communications (ie: 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.
- Create covenants to govern digital groups, which include:
 - Appropriate and inappropriate behavior of members (bullying, pictures that depict abuse, violence, illegal activities, sexual acts, etc.) and the consequence for inappropriate behavior;
 - Who may join and/or view group activity, when participants should leave the group and when/if the group will be disbanded;
 - Description of content that can be posted or published on the site or page;
 - A prohibition of "tagging" photos and videos of children and youth. However, the captioning of photos and videos is permissible with written permission from a parent or guardian;
 - Notification that mandatory reporting laws will be followed; and
 - Consequences for breaking the covenant.
- Delete inappropriate material posted in digital groups, address the behavior and report it, if necessary, in accordance with legal and institutional requirements.
- In video calls, follow the same criteria used in telephone calls. In addition, prudent judgement regarding attire and surroundings should be observed.

- Comply with the following best practices regarding “groups” on social networking sites:
 - Have at least two unrelated adult administrators as well as at least two youth administrators for groups that are designed for youth;
 - Use closed groups, but not “hidden” or “secret” groups, for youth;
 - Have only youth administrators invite other youth to join the online group, unless a youth previously asked an adult administrator to invite them to join;
 - Remove any content that shows or describes inappropriate behavior outside the bounds of the established behavioral covenant;
 - Open social networking groups for youth to parents of current members;
 - Remove adult leaders of youth groups and youth who are no longer members, due to departure, removal from position, or are ineligible because they “aged-out” of a program from social networking sites, list serves, etc;
 - Observe mandated reporting laws regarding suspected abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

Appendix C - Application for Ministry with Children & Youth

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone #s: (home) _____ (work) _____ (cell) _____

E-mail Address _____

Date of Birth _____ Social Security # _____

Emergency Contact:

Phone # _____

Name and relationship _____

Applicant Occupation _____

Current job responsibilities and schedule:

Employment History

(include present and prior employers for the past ten years – add additional pages as needed)

Company name: _____

Position held: _____

Name of Supervisor and Phone # _____

Dates of employment: from _____ to present

Company name: _____

Position held: _____

Name of Supervisor and Phone # _____

Dates of employment: from _____ to _____

Reason for leaving position: _____

Company name: _____

Position held: _____

Name of Supervisor and Phone # _____

Dates of employment: from _____ to _____

Reason for leaving position: _____

Current and previous volunteer experience

(include present and past experience for the past ten years – add additional pages as needed)

Organization: _____

Duties: _____

Name of Supervisor and Phone # _____

Dates: from _____ to _____

Organization: _____

Duties: _____

Name of Supervisor and Phone # _____

Dates: from _____ to _____

Organization: _____

Duties: _____

Name of Supervisor and Phone # _____

Dates: from _____ to _____

Special interests, hobbies, and skills:

Why would you like to work with children and/or youth?

What qualities do you have that would help you work with children and/or youth?

How were you parented as a child?

How do/did you discipline your own children?

Would you be available for periodic training sessions? Yes No

Appendix D – References

In order to protect children, youth and the Diocese of Iowa strictly prohibits interaction with children or youth by anyone known to have a civil or criminal record of child abuse, or who has admitted to sexually abusing children or youth, or has a paraphiliac diagnosis (i.e. pedophilia, exhibitionism, voyeurism) as defined by the American Psychiatric Association. In order to keep our children safe, the Diocese of Iowa requires that all those who work with or around children and/or youth be screened. This screening includes completion of this application, reference checks, sexual offender registry checks, driving or motor vehicle checks (if the person may be transporting children or youth) and criminal history checks (except for church school teachers, adults who participate in overnight activities with children or youth once or twice a year, adults who work or assist in the nursery four or fewer times a year, and adults who supervise or assist with supervising children or youth infrequently – no more than three times a year or for one program or activity during a year that lasts less than one month – for example, assisting with preparation for the Christmas pageant or Vacation Bible School).

References: (Please provide three (3) character references - other than family members - who can identify your strengths and weaknesses and describe your background and ability to relate with children and youth.)

1. Name _____
Address _____
Home/ work/ cell phone #s _____
How does this person know you? _____

2. Name _____
Address _____
Home/ work/ cell phone #s _____
How does this person know you? _____

3. Name _____
Address _____
Home/ work/ cell phone #s _____
How does this person know you? _____

Please answer the following 10 questions.

(If any of your answers are yes, please attach another page and write a full explanation.)

Yes No 1. Have, you, at any time, been involved in or accused, rightly or wrongly, of sexual abuse, neglect or mistreatment (emotional or physical) of children or youth?

Yes No 2. Have you ever been accused or convicted of possession/sales of controlled substances or of driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs?

Yes No 3. Are you using illegal drugs?

Yes No 4. Have you ever been arrested or convicted for any criminal act more serious than a traffic violation?

Yes No 5. Have you ever been involved romantically or sexually with any student in youth ministry or had sexual relations with any minor after you became an adult?

Yes No 6. Have you ever had a paraphiliac diagnosis (pedophilia, exhibitionism, or voyeurism)?

Yes No 7. Have you ever been asked to step away from ministry or work with children or youth in any setting, paid or volunteer?

Yes No 8. Is there anything in your past or current life that might be a problem if we found out about it later?

Yes No 9. Have you ever been the victim of any form of child abuse? (If so, would you like to speak with your priest or a counselor? Yes No)

Yes No 10. Do you have any medical conditions or take any medications that might affect or make ministry with children and youth hazardous for you or them?

Appendix E - Acknowledgement, Release and Signature

To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this application is complete and accurate. I understand that providing false information is grounds for not hiring me or choosing me for a volunteer position or for my discharge if I have already been hired or chosen. I authorize any person or organization, whether or not identified in this application, to provide any information concerning my educational, employment, volunteer, driving, criminal record, sexual registry or other qualification for my employment or volunteering. I also authorize

_____ (congregation) to request and receive such information. In consideration of the receipt and evaluation of this application by the Church, I hereby release any individual, church, youth organization, charity, employer, supervisor, reference, or other person or organization, including records custodians, from any and all liability for damages of whatever kind or nature that may at any time result to me, my heirs or family, because of compliance or any attempts to comply, with this authorization. I waive any right that I may have to inspect any information provided about me by any person or organization identified by me in this application. If hired or chosen, I agree to be bound by the Diocese of Iowa Policies and Procedures Concerning Sexual Boundaries. I have been given and have read a copy of these Policies & Procedures. If I violate these Policies and Procedures, I understand that my volunteer status may be terminated. I state that I HAVE CAREFULLY READ THE FOREGOING RELEASE AND KNOW THE CONTENTS THEREOF, AND I SIGN THIS RELEASE AS MY OWN ACT. This is a legally binding document, which I have read and understand.

X _____
Signed

Print name _____

Date _____

X _____
Witness Signature & Date

Appendix F – How to conduct a CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK in the State of Iowa

The Diocese of Iowa requires that the background of church personnel **who regularly work with or around children or youth** be checked for any history of criminal behavior prior to beginning employment or volunteer work and every five years thereafter. The initial background check must go back at least seven years.

To check for a criminal record in the State of Iowa, contact the following:

Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation
Bureau of Identification
Wallace State Office Building
Des Moines, IA 50319

Forms for conducting a criminal background check can be obtained by calling (515) 281-4776 or downloaded from

<https://dps.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/criminal-investigation/support-operations/RequestForm.pdf>

Request or download both the “request form” and the “billing form”.

Be sure you have the applicant’s signature before you request the criminal record check.

This release is part of the Volunteer Application (See Appendix E)

If the applicant has lived outside the State of Iowa in the past seven years, you will need to contact the other state(s) in which the person has lived to complete the check.

Another option for background checks is from Oxford Document Management Company. You may choose to complete a background check via Oxford through the diocesan office.

Appendix G– How to check the SEXUAL ABUSE REGISTRY in the State of Iowa

The Diocese of Iowa requires that the Sexual Offender Registry be checked for any church personnel **who work (either regularly or occasionally) with or around children** prior to beginning employment or volunteer work and every five years thereafter. The initial check must go back at least seven years.

To check for a criminal record in the State of Iowa, go to

<https://www.iowasexoffender.gov>. You will also need to contact your local Sheriff/Police Department as some offenders are not on the registry. Prior to checking the sexual abuse registry, **be sure you have a signed release** from the individual whose background you are checking. This release is part of the Application for Ministry with Children or Youth (See Appendix C)

If the applicant has lived outside the State of Iowa in the past seven years, you will need to contact the other state(s) in which the person has lived to complete the check