

ST. ANDREW’S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
POLICIES FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

The family of St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church places great value on the children in our community. The following policies and guidelines are meant to promote an environment that is a “safe place”. Safe for those who worship, safe for those who minister, safe for those who come in need, safe for children and safe for all who seek to serve Christ.

Each member of St. Andrew’s must be responsible for the implementation of these policies whether they regularly work with children or just lend a helping hand occasionally. We are all accountable to our children and we must remain vigilant in their protection and care.

St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church also adopts the standard and guidelines for Diocesan Youth events and for adult leaders developed by the Episcopal Diocese of Western New York. (see appendix #1)

For the purpose of this document, the term **church worker** refers to anyone who regularly or occasionally works with children. This could include: the rector, vestry members, Sunday school teachers and substitutes, nursery volunteers, choir director, ushers, acolyte leader, youth group leaders or any one else in the congregation who may have contact with children for a specific event.

A **supervising adult church worker** will also meet the following requirements:

- A person at least 21 years of age who has accepted a role as a leader in a children’s ministry
- Has completed the Diocesan “Safe Church” training or the equivalent with written documentation
- Has regularly attended church and been known to the clergy and congregation for at least one year
- Has no history of sexual misconduct or abuse, and will attest to the same Person may be asked for references or additional background checks may be completed at the discretion of the wardens/rector or vestry. (see appendix #2).

All church workers must agree to comply with St. Andrew's code of conduct and policies. The code of conduct will be posted throughout the Church and periodically in the newsletter so the whole congregation is aware of it. (see appendix #3)

Church workers will not be permitted to work with children until they have been known to the clergy or congregation for at least 1 year.

Church workers shall never, under any circumstances:

- Provide children with non-sacramental alcohol, illegal drugs or pornography
- Consume non-sacramental alcohol or illegal drugs at a children's event
- Be under the influence of alcohol, or illegal drugs at any children's event
- Engage in illegal behavior or permit other adults to engage in illegal behavior
- Engage in any sexual, romantic, illicit or secretive relationship or conduct with any child
- Discuss their own sexual activities or fantasies with children
- Use any form of physical punishment. No person is to strike or hit anyone else at any time. Bullying, intimidation and/or threats of violence are forbidden.

Church workers should not be alone with a child. One on one time should be in a public place, where private conversations are possible if necessary, but in full view of other adults.

Photographs at church or church events may only be taken by family members or with the express permission of the parent/participant. A person designated by the rector or a warden may only take "official" church photographs.

All Sunday school classes will have at least one supervising church worker who meets the above criteria. A second adult or young adult(15+ years) who is trained in St. Andrew's policies for the protection of children should also be present. Under no circumstances, will a class have just one church worker. In the event there is a shortage of teachers, classes will be merged or a warden will be notified immediately to rectify the situation.

Supervising church workers and supportive church workers will be trained in appropriate and inappropriate forms of affection (see appendix #4)

At all children's ministry events (such as youth group), every effort should be made to have at least 2 unrelated adults supervise the event.

No new children's ministries will be developed without approval from the rector and/or the wardens.

Whenever possible parents should accompany their children to the restrooms. During Sunday school, the following procedure will be followed:

- All diapering should be done in the designated area of the nursery
- For children under 6 years of age, a church worker should accompany the child to the restroom and assist the child as necessary.
- For children 6 years and older, either a church worker can accompany the child and wait outside or the child may be accompanied by a second child of the same sex (buddy system). Supervising church workers will monitor to make sure children are not out of the classroom for an excessive amount of time and follow-up as appropriate.

All children's ministry (Sunday, school, youth group, etc) follows an open door policy. Parents are encouraged to observe these activities at any time.

Parents are responsible for knowing where their children are in the Church itself as well as on the grounds.

Children will **never** be left alone or unsupervised in the course of a ministry event. In the unlikely circumstance that a child is found to be missing during an event, the rector, warden or supervising church worker should be notified immediately. All necessary steps will be taken to organize an immediate search for the child and 911 will be called. The search should include: bathrooms, Sunday school rooms and undercroft, the Church proper and the grounds (specifically the prayer garden)

Any adult convicted of prior incidents of sexual misconduct or abuse will not be used in any capacity for children's programming. Any person accused of improper behavior will be removed from the ministry event until the issue is resolved to the satisfaction of the rector and wardens. Please see appendix #5 for a limited access agreement for both cases.

If anyone is aware of a real or suspected violation of these policies, they should report their concern immediately to the rector or a warden. All reports will be taken seriously and the proper civil and church authorities will be notified as necessary.

In the event of a suspicion of child abuse /maltreatment, a warden (in conjunction with the person first identifying the abuse) will call the statewide toll free hotline @ **#1-800-635-1522**. When making an oral report the following information if known should be provided:

- the names and addresses of the child and his parents or other person responsible for his care; family composition
- the child's age, sex, and race;
- the nature and extent of the child's injuries, abuse, or maltreatment, including any evidence of prior injuries, abuse, or maltreatment to the child or his siblings.
- the name of the person or persons responsible for causing the injury, abuse, or maltreatment;
- the source of the report;
- the actions taken by the reporting source, including the taking of photographs or x-rays, removal or keeping of the child, or notifying the medical examiner or coroner;
- any additional information that may be helpful.

In addition, the rector and/or wardens will notify the Diocese of the incident, as necessary.

Appendix #1

Standards for Diocesan Youth Events and Leaders

Accepting the charge of the Children's Charter to "...love, shelter, protect and defend..." our younger brothers and sisters in Christ the Episcopal Diocese of WNY has established these

standards for youth events and for adult leaders. These guidelines are not intended to supplant or

override existing diocesan policies. They are intended to address the specific needs of youth

ministry within those policies.

Definitions:

Youth – Any person 18 years of age or under.

Adult – Any person older than 18 years of age.

Supervising adult – a person at least 21 years of age who has accepted a role as a leader in youth ministry and who meets the following requirements:

- Has completed the Diocesan "Safe Church" and Anti-racism training or the equivalent with written documentation.
- Has regularly attended church at one congregation for at least a year.
- Has NO history of sexual misconduct or abuse. Persons with such a history may not be used in any capacity with a youth event. Any person accused of improper behavior is to be removed from diocesan youth ministry until the issue is resolved.

Chaperone – Any adult assisting at a youth event under the direction and authority of a supervising adult.

Community Covenant:

This agreement delineates how we deal with one another during diocesan youth events. If we accept Christ's charge to "Love one another" and to "Love our neighbors as ourselves" then

we must accept that certain behaviors are unacceptable. Some of these behaviors are:

- **Discrimination** – No person shall be discriminated against on the basis of his or her race, color, gender, sexual orientation, physical abilities, origin, ancestry or religion.
- **Violence** – No person is to strike or hit anyone else at any time. Bullying, intimidation and/or threats of violence are forbidden. No weapons of any kind are to be brought to diocesan youth events. Anyone found in the possession of such weapons will be sent home.

(Appendix #1 con't)

- **Alcohol or illegal drugs** – No alcohol or illegal drugs may be in the possession, or used by, any adults or youth at diocesan youth events. Exception is made for wine used in the Eucharist. Anyone found in possession of, or having consumed these items will be sent home. The Diocese does not rule out the possibility of legal action against such persons.
- **Physical, emotional or sexual abuse** – No person is to be abused while attending a diocesan youth event. Physical abuse is defined as non-accidental bodily injury of one

person by another. Emotional abuse is the spoken or unspoken devaluing of another, such as, name calling or indicating that s/he is worthless. Sexual abuse is any sexualized behavior between people where there is an unequal distribution of power, such as where one person is older or larger than the other. It also includes sexual harassment, such as sexually oriented humor or language (written oral or graphic), unwelcome physical contact, inappropriate comments on clothing, appearance, sexual behavior or preference, repeated requests for social engagements.

- **Tobacco** – while we recognize the intensity of the addiction associated with tobacco the use of tobacco products by youth is prohibited. We encourage all adults to refrain from smoking as much as possible during youth events. Any smoking by adults must be done discretely at a designated location.

- **Denial of basic human needs** – No person is to be denied access to the basic human needs of food, shelter, sleep and clothing at any diocesan youth event.

- **Displays of affection/ sexual relations** – Inappropriate displays of affection and sexual relations are inconsistent with this community.

Other behaviors may also be added to this list as required for youth events.

Leaders Standards

In addition to the requirements listed above all adult leaders at a youth event must meet the following standards of behavior:

1. No adult may date, become romantically or sexually involved with a youth. Adults must be

(Appendix #1 con't)

aware of their physical, mental and emotional interaction with youth at all times.

2. No adult is to give personal gifts or money of inappropriate value to youth without first

consulting with the parents or the other adult leaders.

Youth Event guidelines:

All diocesan youth events must meet the following standards:

1. Two Adult Rule – Two supervising adults are present. The ratio of youth to adults should

never exceed 10 to 1. Adult leadership should reflect the youth attending. Events with both male and female youth required male and female supervising adults.

2. Parental Permission –Parental permission in writing must be obtained IN ADVANCE for

events. A basic medical release form is also recommended

3. No Isolated Counseling – No adult should be alone with a youth outside of the eyesight of

other counselors or staff. If being alone is unavoidable the adult should be sure that another adult is aware of the meeting and is checking in periodically. Counseling should never be done between youth.

4. Overnight events – Separate sleeping facilities for males and females are required. A

single adult and a single youth must never sleep alone together. Appropriate toilet/shower facilities, by gender, must be made available or be made available at specific times by gender if only one facility is available.

5. Open Door policy – No youth event is to function with a closed-door policy. Clergy, parents, church and staff members have a right to observe any youth event at any time. Such a request to view an event MUST take into consideration the needs of the event and be as respectful of those needs as possible.

6. Late arrival/ Early departure – Once a youth has arrived at an event they will remain there until the end of the event unless there is an emergency. Late Arrivals or Early Departures must be negotiated with supervising adult(s) in charge of the event PRIOR TO THE EVENT.

7. Transportation – Unless otherwise stated youth and their families are responsible for transportation to and from events. If a youth arrives in their own vehicle for an event s/he (Appendix #1 con't)

must park the vehicle for the duration of the event (except as noted in #6)

Reporting a problem

Any person who believes s/he has experience improper behavior is strongly encouraged to report it to the proper authorities – supervising adult, event leader, diocesan staff person,

clergy or the bishop as soon as possible. Any adult who receives such a report must respond.

The event leader and other supervising adults should investigate the allegations and make a

report on them Reports that are made during a youth event need to be carefully documented

including – Name and personal information of person(s) making the report, the person(s) affected

by the improper behavior (if different) and the person(s) who allegedly committed the behavior.

A complete description of what is alleged to have happened including when, where and how

often. If there is any question about how to proceed the event leader/supervising adults should

contact additional support people including clergy, diocesan staff or the bishop for guidance. All

legal reporting requirements must also be met.

Note: These guidelines were developed from the Safe Place policies of the Diocese of WNY

(dated 5/97) in addition to standards from the following dioceses and churches: Diocese of Newark, Diocese of Pennsylvania, Diocese of California, Diocese of North Carolina, Diocese of

Central Florida, St. Luke's Episcopal Church Jamestown NY, Orchard Park Presbyterian
Church
Orchard Park NY

ST. ANDREW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Church Worker Acknowledgement for working with children

Personal information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone #: _____

Please initial below (3 times) when you have reviewed this acknowledgement and understand it.

_____ I agree to be bound by St. Andrew's policies and procedures regarding protection of young children, including but not limited to:

- Policies for the protection of children
- Standards for diocesan youth events and leaders
- Code of conduct for the protection of children
- Guidelines for appropriate affection

_____ I understand these policies and procedures may be changed, withdrawn, added to or interpreted at anytime at St. Andrew's discretion and without prior notice to me.

_____ I attest that I have never been convicted of physically, sexually or emotionally abusing a child or adult.

To the best of my knowledge, I attest to the accuracy of the information stated above. I understand that providing false information is grounds for removing me from a church worker position at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church.

Signature

Date

ST. ANDREW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
CODE OF CONDUCT
FOR THE PROTECTION OF OUR CHILDREN

We agree to do our best to prevent abuse and neglect among children involved in church activities and services

We agree not to physically, sexually, or emotionally abuse or neglect a child

We agree to comply with the policies set forth by the vestry regarding the protection of our children

In the event we observe any inappropriate behaviors or policy violations, we agree to report our observations immediately to the rector, warden or vestry member

We acknowledge our obligation and responsibility to protect children and agree to report known or suspected abuse to appropriate civil and church authorities

We understand that the church will not tolerate abuse of children and we agree to comply in spirit and in action with this position

ST. ANDREW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
GUIDELINES FOR APPROPRIATE AFFECTION

The parish of St. Andrew's is committed to creating and promoting a positive, nurturing environment for our children's ministries that protect our children from abuse and our church workers from misunderstandings. Love and affection are part of church life and ministry. There are many ways to demonstrate affection while maintaining positive and safe boundaries with children.

Some positive and appropriate forms of affection are listed below:

- Brief hugs
- Pats on the shoulder or back
- Handshakes
- "High-fives" and hand slapping
- Verbal praise
- Touching hands, faces, shoulders and arms of children
- Arms around shoulders
- Holding hands while walking with small children
- Sitting beside small children
- Kneeling or bending down for hugs with small children
- Holding hands during prayer
- Pats on the head when culturally appropriate

The following forms of affection are considered inappropriate:

- Inappropriate or lengthy embraces
- Kisses on the mouth
- Touching bottoms, chests or genital areas other than for appropriate diapering or toileting of infants and toddlers
- Showing affection in isolated areas such as closets, bathrooms or other private rooms
- Touching knees or legs of children
- Wrestling with children
- Tickling children
- Piggyback rides
- Any type of massage
- Any form of unwanted affection
- Comments or compliments related to physique or body development
- Snapping bras or giving wedgies or similar touch of underwear whether or not other clothing covers it
- Giving gifts or money to individual children
- Private meals with individual children

10/07

LIMITED ACCESS AGREEMENT

For cases of allegation:

A serious complaint or allegation, now under review, has been made about you to the priest and wardens. While this complaint is being investigated, in order to protect the children in our programs from potential risk, and in order to protect you from further suspicion, we ask you to abide by this interim agreement. Signing this document in no way constitutes a presumption or confessions of guilt. This is a routine safety precaution, activated without prejudice toward particular individuals or circumstances. This document will be made known only to the Vicar, the wardens (or other appropriate congregational authorities). It will be kept confidential.

For cases of convicted sex offender:

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church affirms the dignity and worth of all persons. We are committed to being a religious community open to those who are in need of worshipping with us, especially in times of serious personal troubles. We welcome you to our congregation and our membership; however, based on your background, we have concerns about your contact with children and youth in our congregation. The following guidelines are designed to reduce the risk to both you and them of an incident or accusation.

Agreement

Within these guidelines, the congregation welcomes your participation in adult worship services, coffee hour, committee meetings, adult education, all adult social events, and intergenerational events. You are to avoid all contact with children on congregation property or congregation- sponsored events. This includes the following:

- Please do not talk to children
- Please do not volunteer or agree to lead, chaperone or participate in events for children and youth including Sunday school, youth group events, and activities during intergenerational events, driving or otherwise transporting children
- Please remain in the presence of other adults at all times when children are present
- If a child in the congregation approaches you either at Church or in a community place, politely and immediately excuse yourself from the situation
- Please do not take photographs at Church events

I have reviewed this covenant and agree to abide by its provisions. I understand and agree that if I violate this agreement, I will be denied access to future church functions and church property.

I understand that this contract will be reviewed at least yearly and will remain in effect indefinitely.

Signature

Vicar

Date

Date

Warden

Warden

Date

Date