



## Safe Child Policy and Procedures

Christ Church Episcopal seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children who participate in our programs and activities. By implementing these practices, our goal is to protect the children of Christ Church from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff and volunteers (workers) from false accusations.

### Definitions

For purposes of this policy, the terms "child" or "children" or "youth" mean all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years. The term "worker" means all persons ages 18 and older, including clergy, paid parish employees and volunteers, who work with children participating in Christ Church programs.

## Prevention of Misconduct

### Selection of Workers

All persons who desire to work with the children participating in Christ Church programs and or activities will be screened. This screening includes the following:

#### A. Six Month Rule

No person will be considered for any volunteer position involving contact with minors until she/he has been involved with Christ Church for a minimum of six (6) months. This time of interaction between our leadership and the applicant allows for better evaluation and suitability of the applicant for working with children.

#### B. Written Application

All persons seeking to work with children must complete and sign a written application form supplied by Christ Church. The application will request basic information from the applicant. The application form will be maintained in confidence on file at Christ Church.

- a. The application will include an authorization for the church to run a background check. If an individual declines to sign the authorization form, s/he will be unable to work with children.
- b. The applicant must read and sign off on the Christ Church Safe Child Policy.
- c. If the applicant will be driving minors, he or she must be able to provide proof of a valid driver's license in addition to insurance.

#### C. Personal Interview

Upon completion of the application, an interview may be scheduled with the applicant to discuss his/her suitability for the position.

#### D. Criminal Background Check

A national criminal background check is required for all workers. Background checks will be made through Oxford Document Management Company.

- a. All workers must notify the Rector if a criminal charge has been brought against them.
- b. Background checks will be made on workers every five years.

#### E. Child Abuse Prevention Training

The Diocese will offer the required training. Workers should be re-trained every three years. The Bishop's office will approve curriculum and trainers for the required training.



Upon request of the applicant, the Rector and the Vestry will determine on a case-by-case basis in light of the surrounding circumstances whether or not to prohibit an individual from working with children because of an offense. The following convictions automatically disqualify an applicant: criminal convictions for child abuse and sexual misconduct against a minor. Failure to disclose a criminal conviction on the application form will also disqualify an applicant. The background check results will be maintained in a locked file at Christ Church.

### **Two Worker Rule**

It is our goal that a minimum of two unrelated workers supervise programs and activities for children where parents or guardians are not present. Some youth classes may have only one adult teacher in attendance during the class session; in these instances, doors to the classroom should remain open and there should be no fewer than three students with the adult teacher. We do not allow children to be alone with one worker on our premises or in any sponsored activity without parental authorization.

### **Open Door Policy**

Classroom doors should remain open unless there is a window in the door or a side window beside it. Doors should never be locked while persons are inside the room.

### **Teenage Workers**

We recognize that there may be times when it is necessary or desirable for babysitters (paid or volunteer) who are themselves under age 18 to assist in caring for children during programs or activities. The following guidelines apply to teenage workers:

- Must be at least age 14.
- Must be two caregivers at all times.
- Must be under the supervision of an adult in the building.
- Must have references or recommendations.

### **Behavioral Standards for Ministry with Children and Youth**

All workers shall not:

1. Provide children or youth with non-sacramental alcohol, illegal drugs or pornography.
2. Consume non-sacramental alcohol or illegal drugs or misuse legal drugs at any children's or youth event.
3. Be under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs or the misuse of legal drugs at any children's or youth event.
4. Engage in illegal behavior or permit other adults or children to engage in illegal behavior.
5. Engage in any sexual, romantic, illicit or secretive relationship or conduct with any child or youth.
6. Discuss their own sexual activities or fantasies with children or youth.
7. Carry firearms. Firearms and concealed weapons are prohibited at any church activity.

### **Restroom Guidelines**

If a classroom bathroom is not available, a worker should escort a child to the hallway bathroom. The worker should check the bathroom first to make sure that it is empty, and then allow the child inside. The worker should then remain outside the bathroom door and escort the child back to the



classroom. For the protection of all, workers should never be in a closed bathroom stall with a child. Parents are strongly encouraged to have their children visit the bathroom prior to each class.

## Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse

For purposes of this policy, "child abuse" is any action (or lack of action) that endangers or harms a child's physical, psychological or emotional health and development. Child abuse occurs in different ways and includes the following:

- **Physical abuse:** any physical injury to a child that is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burns, and biting.
- **Emotional abuse:** emotional injury when the child is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling and persistent teasing.
- **Sexual abuse:** any sexual activity between a child and an adult or between a child and another child at least four years older than the victim, including activities such as fondling, exhibitionism, intercourse, incest, and pornography.
- **Neglect:** depriving a child of his or her essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care.

Workers may become aware of abuse of a child or children they are working with. In the event that a worker at Christ Church becomes aware of suspected abuse of a child she/he is working with, they should immediately report to the Rector of the parish. The Rector may assist the worker in making a report of child abuse/neglect to the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families. 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 the event that an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred at Christ Church or during our sponsored programs or activities, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. Anyone who knows of a violation of these policies and/or has reason to suspect that child abuse has taken place at Christ Church or in another church-related setting must immediately report this to the Rector, the Senior Warden, and the relevant supervisor.
2. A formal incident report must be completed and submitted to the Rector and Senior Warden. Incident reports will be maintained in the church office.
3. Anyone who knows of a violation of these policies by a clergy person shall immediately report the violation to the Office of the Bishop or the Intake Officer.
4. The Rector, as a mandated reporter, who has reason to suspect that child abuse has taken place shall report it to the appropriate civil authority.

### Contact Information:

- The Office of the Bishop: 414-272-3028 ext. 154 4
- Intake Officer: Rev. Jana Troutman Miller: 262-994-1897; janatroumanmiller@gmail.com
- Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services: (414) 220-SAFE (7233)
- Rev. Seth Dietrich (Clergy in Charge): 414-630-6143; seth@christchurchwfb.org
- Penny Cruse (Sr. Warden): 414-719-1014; pcruse@rwbaird.com
- Rev. Oswald Bwechwa (Youth Formation): 414-750-7165; oswald@christchurchwfb.org
- Bailey Steger (Children's Formation): 715-584-7242; bailey@christchurchwfb.org



- Julie Davis (Sunday School): 773-682-5061; jsmarie@gmail.com

## General Safety Policies

### Peer Abuse

Peer abuse, commonly called "bullying," is harassment and aggression in which a child intentionally threatens, harms or causes distress to another child. This behavior is intentional, repeated and designed to hurt or threaten. Any worker who observes peer abuse must report it to the Rector. Parents of both parties will be contacted.

### Sick Policy

We want to provide a healthy and safe environment for all of the children at Christ Church. Individuals are encouraged to be considerate of others when deciding to participate in children's programming while sick. In general, individuals should not participate if they have experienced any fever, diarrhea, or vomiting within the past 24 hours. Children who exhibit these symptoms will be returned to their parents for the duration of programming. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, those exhibiting respiratory symptoms are strongly encouraged to mask as able for the duration of their symptoms. Christ Church will follow CDC guidelines in regards to masking, isolating, and informing close contacts of exposure. For all other communicable diseases, we will defer to the DHS ["Wisconsin Childhood Communicable Diseases"](#) guidelines.

### Medications Policy

Christ Church workers will not administer either prescription or non-prescription medications to children under our care. Medications should be administered at home. Parents are reminded of our sick child policy.

Exceptions to the medications policy may be granted to parents of children with potentially life-threatening conditions (such as asthma or severe allergic reactions). Exceptions may also be granted to parents of children who participate in overnight or week-long retreats or trips sponsored by Christ Church. Parents of such children should address their situation with the clergy or Children's Ministry Leader to develop a plan of action. Parents must be contacted if a child is sick on a retreat. If medication is deemed appropriate by parents and workers, parents must give authorization.

### Discipline Policy

Christ Church workers will not administer corporal punishment. There should be no spanking, grabbing, hitting, or other physical discipline of children. If a child is continually disruptive to a classroom environment, parents will be contacted.

### Accidental Injuries to Children

In the event that a child or youth is injured while under our care, the following steps should be taken:

1. For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, workers will provide First Aid (Band-Aids, etc.) as appropriate and will notify the child's parent or guardian of the injury at the time the child is picked up from our care.
2. For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid, the parent and/or



guardian will immediately be summoned in addition to the worker's supervisor. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called.

3. Once the child has received appropriate medical attention, an incident report will be completed in the case of injuries requiring treatment by a medical professional.

Contact information for parents will be posted in each classroom.

## Guidelines Using Social Media

The following recommendations and guidelines for social media use are in alignment with the Diocese of Milwaukee's accepted principles of healthy boundaries and safe church practices.

### **General Information about Digital Communications**

All communications sent digitally (email, social networking sites, notes or posts, etc.) are not confidential and may be shared or reposted to others. Communications with children must be transparent.

### **Recommended Practices and Guidelines for Interactions with Children and Youth**

Workers are strongly encouraged to set very stringent privacy settings on any personal social networking profile.

Workers should not submit "friend" requests to children. Workers are strongly discouraged from accepting friend requests from children.

Any material on any site (whether affiliated with the church or not) that raises suspicion that a child has been or will be abused/neglected/exploited should be immediately reported to the clergy and to the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF). If the material is on a church affiliated site, that material should be documented for church records and then removed from the site after consultation with authorities.

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