

TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH POLICIES FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

General Purpose Statement

Trinity Episcopal Church ("Trinity") seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children who participate in our programs and activities. By implementing the below practices, our goal is to protect the children of Trinity 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" include all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years. The term "worker" includes both paid and volunteer persons who work with children.

Selection of Workers

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

- a. **Written Application:** All persons seeking to work with children must complete and sign a written application in a form supplied by us. The application will request basic information from the applicant and will inquire into previous experience with children, previous church affiliation, reference and employment information, as well as disclosure of any previous criminal convictions. The application form will be maintained in confidence on file at Trinity.
- b. **Personal Interview:** Upon completion of the application, a face-to-face interview may be scheduled with the applicant to discuss his/her suitability for the position.
- c. **Reference Checks:** Before an applicant is permitted to work with children, at least two of the applicants' references will be checked. These references should be of an institutional nature as opposed to personal or family references, preferably from organizations where the applicant has worked with children in the past.
- d. **Public Records Check:** A public records background check is required of all workers who are expected to regularly work with children at Trinity. Before a background check is run, prospective workers will be asked to sign an authorization form allowing the church to run the check. If an individual declines to sign the authorization form, he/she will be unable to work with children. What constitutes a disqualifying offense that will keep an individual from working with children will be determined by the Rector on a case-by-case basis in light of all surrounding circumstances. In general, convictions for an offense involving children and/or offenses involving violence, dishonesty, illegal substances, indecency and any conduct contrary to the mission of Trinity will preclude an individual from being permitted to work with children.

In addition to the foregoing, with respect to volunteers, no volunteer will be considered for a position involving contact with children until he/she has been involved with Trinity for a

minimum of six (6) months. This time of interaction between our leadership and the volunteer allows us for better evaluation and suitability of the volunteer working with children.

Behavioral Standards for Ministry with Children

Trinity expects and requires any worker to conduct himself or herself with the utmost honor, integrity, morality and caring, and to be an example to others of living one's life in accordance with the highest standard of moral decency and a reflection of the mission of the church. Although it should go without saying, if any worker commits any of the offenses set forth below, Trinity will act swiftly and thoroughly to protect the children in its programs.

Adults shall not:

- a. provide children with non-sacramental alcohol, illegal drugs or pornography;
- b. consume non-sacramental alcohol or illegal drugs or misuse of legal drugs at any children's event;
- c. be under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or the misuse of legal drugs at any children's event;
- d. engage in illegal behavior or permit other adults or children to engage in illegal behavior;
- e. engage in any sexual, romantic, illicit or secretive relationship or conduct with any child;
- f. discuss their own sexual activities or fantasies with children.

Firearms and concealed weapons are prohibited at any church activity. Rectors may make special exceptions concerning weapons for off-duty police officers or others required to carry firearms.

Monitoring Programs and Interactions with Children

It is our goal that a minimum of two unrelated adult workers will be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during our programs and activities. Some classes may have only one adult teacher in attendance during the class session; in these instances, doors to the classroom should remain open and/or so long as one other adult can maintain visual contact with the teacher. Trinity does not allow minors to be alone with one adult on our premises or in any sponsored activity unless in a counseling situation.

Any new programs, trips or events that involve children should not be undertaken without prior approval by the Rector and the Vestry. No event for children shall take place in a private residence without prior approval by the Vestry.

All adult workers who work with children at Trinity are discouraged from having separate and private relationships with any unrelated child from the church away from sanctioned church activities involving children.

All parish computers at Trinity have adequate password protection. Trinity has clear guidelines and adequate supervision of anyone using the parish computer to access the Internet. Any activity on a parish computer is not considered private and may be accessed by authorized persons.

These safe church policies of Trinity have been distributed to all adult workers who regularly work with children at Trinity and shall be posted on Trinity's website and clearly posted in areas at the church where activities for children take place.

Trinity shall strive to conduct an annual "safe church audit" to review practices and policies within the congregation.

Training

Trinity will provide training on this child protection policy to all new workers and will endeavor to provide opportunities for additional training classes or events. All workers are strongly encouraged to attend these training events and Trinity shall maintain a record of those who attend such training.

RESPONDING TO CONCERNS

Anyone who knows of a violation of these policies shall immediately report the violation to the Rector and Senior Warden of Trinity. Anyone who knows of a violation of these policies by a clergy person from Trinity shall immediately report the violation to the Bishop's office. Anyone who has reason to suspect that child abuse has taken place at Trinity or in another setting is strongly encouraged to tell their parish priest or another member of ordained clergy. Any mandated reporter who has reason to suspect that child abuse has taken place shall report it to the appropriate civil authority.

The Rector at Trinity, upon hearing of reports of violations of this policy, shall be responsible for providing appropriate pastoral care to all those affected. Appropriate remedial and/or disciplinary action that may be taken by Trinity shall include termination of employment or volunteer ministry with the church. The Bishop, upon hearing reports of violations by clergy, shall be responsible for providing appropriate pastoral care to all those affected, and shall be responsible for taking appropriate remedial and/or disciplinary action, including canonical disciplinary action.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

The Rector of Trinity: The Reverend Canon Thomas J. Furrer (860) 651-0201 at Extension 13

Senior Warden: Troy McFarlane (860) 668-5363

Diocesan Office of Pastoral Response: (860) 233-4481 Extension 122

The Abuse and Neglect Hotline for the Connecticut Department of Children and Families:
1-800-842-2288

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