



DIOCESE OF THE NORTHEAST AND MID-ATLANTIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

As Christian adults we are called to establish a secure environment where “the perfect love of God works to cast out all fear” (1 John 4:18) and the nurture and love of God are made known to all, in particular to our children and youth. In this way we can fulfill the biblical mandate to “train up our children in the way they should go” (Proverbs 22:6).

The purpose of this document is to give instruction to the clergy, laity, and churches of the Diocese of the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic that will instruct us and inform our decisions and methods with regard to safeguarding the children and youth entrusted to us.

May God be glorified in all we do.

REC RESOLUTION ON CHRISTIAN SEXUAL ETHICS

RESOLVED, that we, the 46th General Council of the Reformed Episcopal Church, reaffirm the biblical standard given for the well-being of society:

That sexual intercourse should take place only between a man and a woman who are married to each other.

That fornication, adultery, and homosexual acts are sinful in all circumstances.

That Christian leaders are called to be exemplary in all spheres of morality, including sexual morality, as a condition of being appointed or remaining in office.

That the Church is called upon to show Christ-like compassion to those who have fallen into sexual sin, encouraging them to repent and receive forgiveness, and offering the ministry of healing to all who suffer physically or emotionally as a result of such sin.

(Adopted by the 46th General Council of the Reformed Episcopal Church,
Meeting at St. Mark's Reformed Episcopal Church, Jenkintown, PA, May 23, 1990)

POLICY GUIDELINES for Parishes, Parish Schools, and Parish Daycares

1. The Rector, Curate, Vicar, Minister-In-Charge, or Interim (hereafter referred to as **Rectors et al.**) should know the general meeting plans of smaller groups within the church body, especially any regarding youth.
2. All Parishes must add a **Directors and Officers** clause or rider to their Liability policies. This protects the Trustees, and other officers of the Diocese: Bishop[s], Archdeacon, Deans, Chancellor, Council officers, and Standing Committee.
3. All parishes must confirm that their liability policy covers both physical and sexual abuse claims. This confirmation is the responsibility of the **Rector et al.**
4. If you lease, rent, or permit other ministries to use your facilities, **Rectors et al.** must verify that the third-party ministry or group lists the parish as an ***additional insured*** on their policy. There must be a written record of this insurance kept in the church office. This must be reviewed and/or renewed **annually** by the Vestry.
5. Parents should sign their elementary-aged children in and out of youth activities or childcare.
6. All daycare nap areas and youth camp sleeping areas should be well enough illuminated for a supervisor to be able to see all the children in one room at a glance.
7. Children should never be allowed in bed with adults for a nap or in an overnight setting.
8. On overnight activities an appropriate “night light” should be provided.
9. Individual sleeping bags or mats must be at least 18 inches apart. Boys and girls should always have separate sleeping accommodations. In a naptime setting this would mean opposite sides of the room.
10. Staff or volunteers should never be allowed to be under a blanket with children.
11. At the end of any activity **two** staff members should stay with the last child to leave until that child is picked up.
12. The parent/guardian or adult who drops off the child/children should be asked to provide in writing the names of any other adults who are authorized to pick up the children.
13. For daycare programs, parish schools, and youth camp activities, an ID photo of every child should be taken when they enroll. A verified youth worker should be in charge of the photos and keep them secure. For daycare programs and schools, photos should be taken annually. For youth camping programs, the ID photos should be taken at the beginning of the program, and kept until the activity is over, at which time they should be deleted or destroyed. Daycares or schools should keep such information on file in the school office. This need not apply to single evening youth activities or weekly church nursery or Sunday School programs.
14. Clergy, staff members, and volunteers should not meet or interact with individual children in private setting or where unobserved by other adults. In a discipleship or mentoring situation interactions should take place in a public place or where other adults are present.

Policy for Treatment of Alleged Perpetrators

1. The alleged offender should be considered innocent until proven guilty.
2. If an allegation is made against someone who has been or is currently on your staff or who is a volunteer, allegations should not be made public (to the school or parish) until it is an indictment and/or authorities have given that instruction (in order to keep confidential a potentially-false allegation and permit authorities time to verify it). As stated above, if the alleged perpetrator is currently employed or serving as a volunteer, they must be immediately removed from contact with children. This removal does not need to be a public display or announcement, but it must be done to protect the integrity of all involved until the allegation is verified.
3. If the accused admits to wrongdoing and guilt and shows reasonable signs of repentance and desire for forgiveness, it is the Church's responsibility to enable this restoration to whatever extent is possible in each circumstance. Pastoral confession and counsel should be provided, but this does not negate any other policies listed in this document.

Policy for Treatment of Alleged Victims

1. We should always seek to treat those who report allegations with the utmost care and compassion.
2. Reports should be taken seriously and gently, and the reports should be received by two or more verified youth workers/directors.
3. It is not our responsibility to pass judgement on either the accused or the accuser.

Responding to a Child Victim

One of several ways in which the clergy, staff member, or volunteer may come to suspect child abuse or neglect is from information that a child himself or herself shares. If a child discloses abuse or neglect, the clergy, staff member, or volunteer receiving such a communication should attempt to:

1. Respect the child's privacy by finding an appropriate non-threatening place to talk, but not isolated.
2. If reasonably possible, ask a staff member, trained volunteer, or other responsible adult to join in listening to the child's/youth's account.
3. Keep calm, listen, and avoid expressing shock or outrage.
4. Let the child know that he/she is believed.
5. Assure the child that any abuse was not his/her fault.
6. If helpful, tell the child that he/she was brave to disclose the abuse.
7. Child victims are often vague in their initial disclosure. Avoid questions that could make the child feel responsible or plant ideas that could taint the child's recollection and account.
8. Write down as accurately as possible what the child disclosed.
9. Be careful afterwards not to discuss the information with or in front of other people who do not need to know what happened - appropriate church and legal authorities.

Policy on Sexual Discrimination or Harassment

Subject to Holy Scripture and the Canons of the REC, The Diocese of the NE and Mid Atlantic of the REC decries all forms of sexual harassment, intimidation or discrimination.

Any accusation of sexual harassment, intimidation or discrimination by a member of the clergy should be reported to the Bishop and the Standing Committee. Any accusation of sexual harassment, intimidation or discrimination by a parish lay leader should be reported to the Rector et al. and Parish Council.

PROCEDURES FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

1. All clergy and youth workers, both paid and volunteer, must submit to criminal background checks as required by State law. They must be willing to give their SSN for this check. Background checks are required to be renewed at the following rates as of this document 6/6/25.

(Updates to these requirements will be found in the *Protect My Ministry Training*, and in the Mandated Reporter training provided by each state.)

MD & PA - 5 years

NJ – 2 years, records must be kept for 5 years

NY – 7 years

MA & CANADA – 3 years

2. Background checks must be initiated by the **Rector et al.** of every parish each time a new worker is being duly certified for youth work in the parish, parish school, parish daycare or diocese. Background checks must be verified **annually** with the diocese. This Verification will be attached to the Annual Credentials Form which must be filled out by each parish for Diocesan Council (submitted on or before October). Every **Rector et al.** is responsible for his own parish. Parishes or missions with vacancies of a full-time clergy, will be under the direct responsibility of the Bishop or his appointee. Any physical copy of background checks must be kept secured and locked on the church premises.

3. All parishes must keep on file the Name, Address, Phone Number, and a copy of Drivers' License or State issued ID for Youth Workers. There must also be a list of all previous places where the youth workers have provided paid or volunteer youth services. **All** required references should be followed up with previous employers or volunteer organizations.

4. No parishioner should be allowed to work with children until they have been part of the congregation for at least one year.

5. Parents should be allowed to come and observe at any time, unannounced, subject to security arrangements. Parents should have access to church policies regarding their children. All Churches should have a policy regarding the appropriate reporting of discipline issues to parents.

6. No Youth worker should ever be alone with an individual child. There should always be at least two adults present at all youth activities. If you have mixed genders together, then you should have both a female and male adult present. They should not be a married couple.

7. All isolated areas of the Church should be off limits or locked to children. Little children should never be allowed to wander alone inside the facility.
8. Infants and toddlers participating in non-daycare Church programs must have all diapering needs attended to by the parents. Diapers are to be changed in designated areas, not in public.
9. If a child gets sick or injured at an activity, a parent must be notified immediately.
10. No Jr. youth workers (teens) should ever be left alone with children.
11. Older children (volunteers or attendees) should never accompany a younger child to the bathroom, *except in the case of a sibling*. An appropriate supervisor should accompany the child after notifying someone else, and they should **wait outside**.
12. Physical contact between boys and girls should be carefully monitored.
13. Physical contact between older children and younger children should be carefully monitored.
14. Older children (volunteers or attendees) should never have unsupervised access to younger children.
15. Pay attention to recommended ratios of adults to children per age group while always insisting on at least two adults.

Infants: 2 adults for up to 8; 1 additional adult for every additional 1 to 4 infants.

Young toddlers: 2 adults for up to 10; 1 additional adult for every additional 1 to 5 toddlers

2 and 3 years: 2 adults for up to 16; 1 additional adult for every additional 1 to 8

4 years: 2 adults for up to 20; 1 additional adult for every additional 1 to 10

School age: 2 adults for up to 36; 1 additional adult for every additional 1 to 18 children

Mixed age group: ratio for the youngest child in the group

16. A youth worker cannot have **any** youth in their home without a parent or other youth worker present, or in their vehicle without parental consent which has been signed in the presence of a youth leader.

17. All clergy and youth workers, both paid and volunteer, **must** participate in Mandated Reporter Training.

[Mandated Reporter Training](#)

<https://mandatedreportertraining.com>

(If you are viewing this on your computer, simply click the first link and it will take you to a page which will help you get all the information you need, and it is state specific. Simply click on “Courses”>Find Your State>Select Your State>Scroll Down the page to General Training and start your class.

If you are reading this on a printed document, type the second link into your browser and it will direct you to the page you need.)

IN THE EVENT OF THE REPORT OF AN ALLEGATION OR INCIDENT WITH IMMEDIATE THREAT OF DANGER OR CONTINUED ILLICIT ACTIVITY:

1. If someone raises an allegation against anyone in your parish, whether clergy, officer, laity, or visitor, you must immediately contact the proper authorities for your state. This procedure will be found in the ***Protect My Ministry Training*** which each clergy and verified youth worker will be required to maintain as part of their periodic background checks, as well as in the Mandated Reporter Training provided by each state.
2. If the allegation is made verbally, require that a *written* report be submitted to the rector and parish wardens. More than one allegation is not required. If the allegation is about the rector, the report must be made to the parish wardens and Bishop. If the incident involves allegations regarding a Bishop, then this shall be reported to the Standing Committee and the Chancellor.
3. **If permitted by your local jurisdiction**, you must immediately contact your insurance company to let them know of the allegation. They may have further directives for you. If an allegation is made about someone who works for a group utilizing the property and not part of your church laity or officers, and it has already been reported to the police, you should still contact your insurance company and may desire to seek legal counsel as well.
4. Only after the first two contacts above are made, should you contact the Bishop, Archdeacon, or your Dean. Be sure to have any information from the authorities and the insurance company that your ecclesiastical authorities may need.
5. The alleged offender should be considered innocent until proven guilty but should be removed from leading the group and any access to children while you await instruction from the authorities.
6. If an allegation is made against someone who is on your staff or who is a volunteer, allegations should not be made public (to the school or parish) until it is an indictment and/or authorities have given that instruction (in order to keep confidential a potentially-false allegation and permit authorities time to verify it). Modern news cycles may make this a moot point, but it should be coming from us.
7. See Policy for Treatment of Alleged Victims for how to respond to someone who is making an allegation in order to give proper respect and care for the communication.

IN THE EVENT OF THE REPORT OF AN ALLEGATION OR INCIDENT THAT HAS OCCURED IN THE PAST, AND POSES NO IMMEDIATE THREAT OR DANGER TO ANY YOUTH PRESENTLY INVOLVED IN THE PARISH PROGRAM:

1. If someone raises an aged allegation against anyone currently in your parish or your parish employ, whether clergy, officer, laity, or visitor, you must immediately contact the proper authorities for your state. This procedure will be found in the ***Protect My Ministry Training*** which each clergy and verified youth worker will be required to maintain as part of their periodic background checks, as well as in the Mandated Reporter Training provided by each state.
2. If the allegation is made verbally, require that a *written* report be submitted to the rector and parish wardens. More than one allegation is not required. If the allegation is about the rector, the report must be made to the parish wardens and Bishop. If the incident involves allegations regarding a Bishop, then this shall be reported to the standing committee and the Chancellor.
3. **If permitted by your local jurisdiction**, you must immediately contact your insurance company to let them know of the allegation. They may have further directives for you. If an allegation is made about a person/persons who worked for a group utilizing the property, or for a person/persons who no longer works for a group currently using parish property, and not part of your church laity or officers, and it has already been reported to the police, you should still contact your insurance company and may desire to seek legal counsel as well.
4. Only after the first two contacts above are made, should you contact the Bishop, Archdeacon, or your Dean. Be sure to have any information from the authorities and the insurance company that your ecclesiastical authorities may need.
5. If an allegation is made against someone who is on your staff or who is a volunteer, allegations should not be made public (to the school or parish) until it is an indictment and/or authorities have given that instruction (in order to keep confidential a potentially-false allegation and permit authorities time to verify it).
6. See Policy for Treatment of Alleged Victims for how to respond to someone who is making an allegation in order to give proper respect and care for the communication.