



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF VIRGINIA

The Falls Church Episcopal Child Safety, Sexual Abuse, and Misconduct Prevention and Response Policy Manual



A. Introduction

1. Prayerful Consideration

Prayer for the Care of Children

Almighty God, you have blessed us with the joy and care of Children: Give us calm strength and patient wisdom as we bring them up, that we may teach them to love whatever is just and true and good, following the example of our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen. *Book of Common Prayer, page 829, prayer 46*

Prayer for Guidance

O God, by whom the meek are guided in judgment, and light rises up in darkness for the godly: Grant us, in all our doubts and uncertainties, the grace to ask what you would have us to do, that the Spirit of wisdom may save us from all false choices, and that in your light we may see light, and in your straight path may not stumble; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. *Book of Common Prayer, page 832, prayer 5*

Scripture Reading

“People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, “Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is too such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.’ And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.”
Mark 10:13-16, NRSV

2. The Falls Church Episcopal Commitment

Background

The Falls Church Episcopal is committed to the spiritual nurture of the children and families in our congregation as they grow to love and serve Jesus Christ. To facilitate such nurture and growth we must create safe spaces and safe relationships for that development – it is part of our baptismal promise.

We join the Commonwealth of Virginia in the commitment to protect the children in our care. The following policy reflects best practices from churches and child welfare agencies around the country and are in compliance with VA State Child Protective Service/Mandatory Reporting Laws.

Purpose

Our purpose for establishing this policy is to demonstrate our commitment to the physical and emotional safety, and spiritual growth of all children, youth, as well as the adults that serve these communities. This policy applies to all programs involving children, youth, and adults while in the building or on the grounds of The Falls Church Episcopal or while participating or serving in off-site events or trips sponsored by The Falls Church Episcopal. This policy further applies to ministries, groups, users, and renters who are not directly carrying out Falls Church Episcopal

activities but utilize the Falls Church Episcopal facilities to the extent their activities involve interaction with children, youth, and adults on a continuous basis. All such groups will sign a facility covenant agreement that outlines the policies applicable to the group, including this policy.

B. Training for the Prevention of Sexual Misconduct and Abuse: Why

1. Required by Federal Regulations and Episcopal Church Polity

Federal Government: Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when: submission to or rejection of this conduct explicitly or implicitly affects an individual's employment, unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

Episcopal Church

General Convention Resolution 1991-B052

Resolved, the House of Deputies concurring, That the 70th General Convention of the Episcopal Church declares that sexual abuse, exploitation, coercion, and harassment of adults and minors by clergy and church employees are abuses of trust, a violation of the Baptismal Covenant, contrary to Christian Character, and are therefore wrong; [followed by establishment and tasking of Committee on Sexual Exploitation]

General Convention Resolution 2006 -A156

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention of The Episcopal Church affirm the work already occurring in many dioceses and at the same time recommit itself to the positions taken by previous General Conventions that sexual misconduct (encompassing both sexual harassment and sexual exploitation) of adults by clergy, church employees, and volunteer workers has been and continues to be of deep concern to this Church, is an abuse of trust, a violation of the Baptismal Covenant, contrary to Christian character and is, therefore, wrong; and be it further

Resolved, that each diocese adopt policies for the protection from sexual misconduct of those served by diocesan programs, those who volunteer in the work of the diocese or are employed by the diocese, and that dioceses assist congregations in the development of such procedures and policies, including using the many resources that already exist, that address the following:

- the articulation of behavioral standards for all clergy, lay employees, and volunteers who work with adults or who provide pastoral counseling, pastoral care, spiritual direction, or the sacraments;
- a screening process for all clergy, lay employees, and volunteers who provide pastoral counseling education and training for all clergy, lay employees, and volunteers as listed above, with particular attention paid to what legally constitutes sexual harassment and to appropriate behavior and inappropriate sexual or sexualized behaviors towards adults, and with periodic refresher training encouraged;
- guidelines for responding to concerns of sexual misconduct; and be it further Resolved, that each diocese shall report to the House of Bishops Committee on Pastoral Development prior to the Spring 2009 House of Bishops meeting with a copy of its

adopted and implemented policy and an evaluation of the history of its use. A summary report shall be made to the House of Bishops Spring 2009 meeting and a full report made to the 76th General Convention.

2. Consistent with Commitment to Pastoral and Spiritual Care

In essence, pastoral care grows out of faith-based relationships and proceeds with an awareness of the spiritual and emotional needs of both the individual and the community. It may include providing guidance, support, consolation and even confrontation, in an effort to minister as we believe God would desire. This policy effectuates our commitment to these values.

C. Definitions

- 1. Diocese of Virginia.** The Diocese of Virginia defines child sexual abuse as follows. Sexual abuse of a child is a criminal offense in every state in the United States. Virginia law defines an abused child as a child less than 18 years of age whose parents or other persons responsible for his or her care: commit or allow to be committed any illegal sexual act upon a child, including rape, incest, indecent exposure, and prostitution, or allow a child to be used in any sexually explicit visual material.

Child abuse that takes place within the family or where the child is in the care of another adult is the responsibility of Child Protective Services. In other situations where the child is abused by a non-caretaker whether that person is known to the child or not, the police are responsible for the investigation.

- 2. Virginia State Law.** Child neglect or abuse is defined as:
 - Causing, or threatening to cause, a non-accidental physical or mental injury, or creating a substantial risk of impairment of bodily or mental function.
 - Neglecting or refusing to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, emotional nurturing or health care.
 - Neglecting or refusing to provide adequate supervision in relation to a child's age and level of development.
 - Any recent act or failure to act by a perpetrator which causes non-accidental serious physical injury to a child under 18 years of age.
 - An act or failure to act by a perpetrator which causes non-accidental serious mental injury to or sexual abuse or sexual exploitation of a child under 18 years of age.
 - Any recent act, failure to act or series of acts or failures to act by a perpetrator which creates an imminent risk of serious physical injury to or sexual abuse or sexual exploitation of a child under 18 years of age: Serious physical neglect by a perpetrator constituting prolonged or repeated lack of supervision or the failure to provide essentials of life, including adequate medical care, which endangers a child's life or development or impairs the child's functioning.

Sexual abuse encompasses acts of sexual assault and sexual exploitation by a parent or other caregiver. It includes a broad range of behaviors, such as fondling; oral, vaginal, or anal intercourse; indecent exposure; voyeurism and sexual exploitation. It may consist of a single incident or of many incidents over a long period of time. Victims range in age from infants to teenagers.

3. The Falls Church Episcopal. The Falls Church Episcopal defines additional terms used in this policy as follows:

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Adult	Any persons(s) 18 years of age or older.
Child/Children and Minor	Any person(s) under the age of 18.
Youth	Any child(ren) in grades 6 through 12. Youth are considered children for the purpose of this policy.
Helper	Any person(s) under the age of 18 who serves in a volunteer role.
Staff Persons	Any person(s) employed by The Falls Church Episcopal.
Volunteer	Any person(s) 18 years of age or older, unpaid, who assists with the care, supervision, or guidance, of children or who routinely interact with children as part of a church activity under the supervision of staff.
Children’s Activities	Any activity or program where children are under the supervision of staff persons or volunteers.
Youth Activities	Any activity or program specifically for children in grades 6 through 12. However, youth are still considered children for the purposes of this policy.

D. Training and Screening: Objectives, Waivers and Documentation

1. Benefits of Training. Training is a crucial deterrent to child sexual abuse and adult sexual misconduct. Training:

- educates clergy and lay people on what types of behaviors can foster an environment where misconduct can take place;
- equips ministers to recognize warning signs of misconduct;

- sets out best practices for misconduct prevention;
 - and provides a framework for response in the tragic event that misconduct does happen.
- 2. Provision of Training.** Diocesan training on the prevention of child sexual abuse and adult sexual misconduct is provided in two ways: (i) through reading this manual and (ii) by completing the appropriate workshop or online courses. To show you've completed the requirement, you will be given a copy of the certificate of completion at the end of an in-person diocesan training workshop or you can print your own certificate after completing online courses.
- 3. Retention of Records and Renewal.**
- Clergy must keep a copy of their certificate in their own files and submit copies to the diocese and to the parish or other institution they serve.
 - Lay persons must keep a copy of their certificate for their files and submit a copy to their parish.
 - Those unable to present documentation when requested must complete another workshop. Workshop attendees are responsible for obtaining and keeping documentation of workshop completion.
 - Training must be renewed after ten (10) years. Parishes may require more frequent renewals at the discretion of the rector.
- 4. Requirement.** The Falls Church Episcopal requires a full two and one-half (2.5) hour in-person training to be completed every three (3) years. During the years that the full training is not required, all clergy and lay persons to whom the policy applies must attend one (1) hour refresher course. The training requirement can be waived if someone can produce a certificate of completion for an equivalent training in another Episcopal diocese and certifies they have read this manual. The Falls Church Episcopal does not accept training from other denominations or secular organizations.

E. Screening and Recruiting/Hiring

Another effective means of reducing the incidence of child sexual abuse or adult sexual misconduct is to carefully screen clergy and all lay workers, paid and unpaid.

- 1. Screening.** All potential church workers, paid or unpaid/employees or volunteers, are subject to the following screening requirements:
- a. Careful review of a signed job application (as applicable).
 - b. A personal reference check. Each applicant for church work, paid or unpaid, is asked to list three personal references, excluding former employers or relatives. All references identified in the application process must be checked. Personal references may be checked in one of two ways.
 - i. The Personal Reference Check Form may be used in contacting each

- person listed as a reference. The form may be mailed or e-mailed to the applicant's references; or
- ii. More commonly, an interviewer will contact the references by telephone and use the form as a guide for questions, completing the form for each reference with the reference's answers. Completed reference forms should be kept with the applicant's employment file. Reference forms should be kept with the applicant's employment file.
- c. An investigation of "red flags." All "red flags," e.g., gaps in employment history, frequent job changes, excessive debt, a pattern of traffic violations, substance abuse history, will require an explanation.
 - d. A background check. A background check can be carried out in one of two ways:
 - i. *State Police Criminal Background Check.* This check is limited to identifying records in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The fee for a criminal history records check is around \$15. Initiate a state police criminal history and/or sex offender check by going to www.virginiatrooper.org and filing form SP-167.
 - ii. *Oxford Document Background Check.* An Oxford Document Management Company check includes a credit report and reference checks of former employers and educational institutions. The Diocese of Virginia has an association with Oxford. Results will be sent to the diocese, then forwarded to the parish. The fee is around \$100, depending on the scope. Name and current mailing address of the person to be checked is required. To initiate this background check, email the Office of Transition Ministries of the Diocese (Vicky Bickel, vbickel@thediocese.net).
 - e. The retention of records of all stages of the screening process. Note: all records related to this process will be easily accessible for future reference, and maintained in a manner that preserves the privacy of the individual to whom they pertain.

2. Hiring Requirements. All individuals "hired" as employees -and- all individuals approved as volunteers, who, as part of a regularly scheduled program, activity or service, accept responsibility for a child or have direct contact with children will be required to complete and provide:

- a. For employees – written application, references, and a personal interview;
- b. For volunteers – a written intake form and at least three (3) personal references;
- c. Documentation sufficient to prove identity and information disclosed on application. This includes at a minimum the following information:
 - i. Applicant's driver's license¹ to verify identity;

¹ For applicants seeking driving as one of his or her duties, the employer must review a copy of his/her proof of insurance and driving record (seek this information at least 10 days before the start of the job); an applicant may obtain his/her record by requesting it from the local office of the Division of Motor Vehicles.

- ii. Documentation or other verification of educational claims or credentials, and military, employment and volunteer history claimed in the applications (for example, checking that the worker actually graduated from the college he/she has listed).
- d. A Virginia Child Abuse History Clearance through the Virginia Department of Human Services;
- e. A Virginia State Police Criminal Record Check;
- f. Documentation to confirm that the individual has completed the preliminary three (3) hour Safe-Church and child misconduct prevention training, and
- g. A Signed Participation Covenant Agreement that certifies that the individual:
 - i. Does not have a prior child sexual abuse conviction, paraphiliac diagnosis (including but not limited to pedophilia, voyeurism or exhibitionism) or act of abuse, has not been arrested for or convicted of any crime involving child abuse, nor had any such conviction expunged, has not been charged with child sexual abuse in a civil proceeding, has never committed an act of child sexual abuse; and
 - ii. Has obtained a read and received a certificate acknowledging the diocesan policy on child abuse and sexual misconduct.

3. Further Requirements.

- a. All volunteers and staff who, as part of a regularly scheduled program, activity or service, accept responsibility for a child or have direct contact with children shall be required to demonstrate an active relationship with The Falls Church Episcopal for at least six (6) months prior to serving in a supervisory role in children or youth activities. In the case of new volunteers, staff hires, references deemed adequate by the Rector and Associate Rector, will replace the six (6)-month waiting period.
- b. Background checks will be repeated at least every (3) three years, while the National Sex Offender Registry will be searched every year. Volunteers with clearances older than three (3) years or those without clearances because they were approved as volunteers before September 9, 2018 must comply by September 1, 2019.

F. Personal Precautions

- 1. **Clergy.** Be aware that sexual attraction and misconduct can cripple ministry. Develop appropriate staff relationships and office arrangements (such as windows in doors) that protect against misconduct. Be aware that there are sexually aggressive, emotionally needy, even predatory persons among parishioners who seek out leaders at church, conferences, and public places. Their purpose may be an inappropriate attachment and perhaps sexual misconduct. Always use prudence regarding times and places of meeting, especially until a person's motives are known. *Understand that the person in power is responsible for keeping appropriate boundaries even if pursued.*

2. **Interaction with Children.** The following standards of interaction with children shall always be carefully followed:

- Appropriate physical affection between clergy, staff, or volunteers and children is important for children’s development, and is generally suitable in the church setting. **It is always appropriate to ask before any form of physical contact initiated, in order to respect boundaries of the individual.**
- Physical contact and affection should be given only in observable places. It is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or misinterpreted when physical contact is open to observation.
- Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. The personal behavior of clergy, staff, or volunteers must always foster trust. Personal conduct must be above reproach.
- Appropriate physical interaction includes, but is not limited to:
 - Smiles
 - Words of encouragement, specifically about a person’s heart and mind, character and conduct
 - Words of encouragement, specifically about a person’s heart and mind, character and conduct
 - Handshakes, high fives, fist bumps
 - Thumbs up
 - Side-to-side hugs, always in public and only when initiated by a child
 - Pats on the shoulder or upper back
- Inappropriate physical interaction includes, but is not limited to:
 - Meeting alone in a non-public or isolated place
 - Wrestling
 - Tickling
 - Sitting in laps (except for nursery-aged children)
 - Kissing on the lips
 - Full frontal hugs or “bear hugs”
 - Commenting on children’s bodies
 - Forcing unwanted affection
 - Being nude in front of children
 - Showing favoritism or possessiveness toward a child or youth
 - Ridiculing the beliefs of a child or youth’s parents or a flagrant disregard of a parent’s wishes
 - Offering children or youth cigarettes, alcohol or drugs
 - Allowing children or youth to view pornography or to visit inappropriate internet sites
 - Asking a child or youth to “keep secrets” from his or her

- parents
- Wearing inappropriate clothing
- Staring or taking photographs while others are dressing or showering
- Taking photographs without permission

G. Institutional Precautions

1. Risk Factors. According to the Diocese of Virginia, abuse is more likely to occur when:

- Boundaries in an organization are not clear. When, for example, work and personal/social situations are consistently blended.
- There is very rigid or closed communication so that what happens takes place in secret.
- There is poor or nonexistent supervision, particularly with new or junior staff or clergy.
- There is a controlling or charismatic leader and disagreement would be seen as a betrayal of that leader.
- The clergy/lay leader does not have friends outside the church.
- A church doesn't have a clear sexual abuse and misconduct policy
- The sexual abuse and misconduct policy is not publicly available on social media, website and other avenues. Note: situational predators look for avenues to interact with children and will often look for avenues that do not have clearly stated policies.
- A church fosters a culture of secrecy. Note: privacy and secrecy are not mutually exclusive, interchangeable or the same. Zero tolerance culture respects privacy but does not protect secrecy.

2. Screen Staff During Hiring Process. *See Section E. Screening and Recruiting/Hiring* above.

3. Insurance Coverage. Ensure that your congregation has adequate and appropriate insurance coverage. The Falls Church Episcopal's general liability insurance policy is with the Church Insurance Company of Vermont and includes coverage for Sexual Misconduct Liability.

4. Romantic Relationships in the Workplace. There are not prohibitions on lay coworkers engaging in a mutually agreed upon romantic relationship, but they out to be entered into very carefully and transparently. Such relationships should be disclosed to the rector, associate rector and the wardens.

5. Computers and Electronic Devices – Prohibition on Pornography.

- No computer or other electronic device in church buildings or on church property may be used to access pornography.
- No computer or other electronic device in the church, on church trips, and retreats may be used to access pornography, create pornographic

imagery, manufacture pornography, sell, or distribute pornography.

6. Electronic Communications Generally. All communication sent digitally (email, social networking sites, notes or posts, etc.) is NOT CONFIDENTIAL and may be shared or reposted to others.

- Interactions in the virtual world need to be transparent, as a window in the door provides transparency in the physical world.
- 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/exploitation of children, youth, elders and vulnerable adults apply in the virtual world as they do in the physical world.

Further guidance on electronic communications in The Falls Church Episcopal environment is attached hereto as Appendix D.

7. Prevention Practices

- i. *Ratios.* In order to provide a safe haven, and not jeopardize our ministries, a minimum of two (2) unrelated and unmarried adult staff and/or volunteers will be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during programs and activities at or sponsored by The Falls Church Episcopal.
- ii. *Rooms and Meeting Spaces.*
 - Each room or space where children are being cared for will have a window in the door or the door will be left open;
 - All activities should occur in open view; and
 - Should the children’s activity be an outdoor program or occur in a setting which makes it difficult to comply with this policy, the staff person in charge of the activity shall take appropriate measures to make sure that the setting suits the activity, and the children are properly supervised.
- *Helpers.*
 - Helpers are exempt from background checks: however, they must be responsible and always work in the immediate vicinity of two unrelated, adult, supervisors;
 - Helpers cannot be left alone with children because helpers are considered children; and
 - Helpers should be helping with children at least five (5) years younger than themselves.
 -

- *Overnight Activities.*
 - Overnight activities require at least two (2) adults of each gender when both girls and boys are present. Leaders must assure that the children/youth are given appropriate privacy in areas of sleeping changing and bathing
 - All activities that take place away from The Falls Church Episcopal shall have completed permission forms signed by the parents/guardians of the children attending the activities; and
 - Scouting and similar organizational activities that take place away from The Falls Church Episcopal are expected to comply with their own rules and regulations. The Falls Church Episcopal is not liable for any activities that take place elsewhere. Those activities within the church will comply with this policy.

- *Individual Pastoral Care and Mentoring.*
 - While one-on-one pastoral care is a fundamental part of ministry, care must be taken to see that it is conducted in an environment that provides visibility by other adults.
 - Another adult should know the volunteer's or staff member's whereabouts and whom he or she is meeting with.
 - No one should engage in secretive and private relationships with children or young people.
 - As a rule, there should be no more than three (3) to five (5) private meetings with any one (1) child or young person per year.
 - In certain situations, requiring one-on-one mentoring, children may be with one (1) adult in a public space (such as a common area in the church, an ice cream parlor, restaurant, or public lobby) with the written permission of the child's parent. The adult should notify a Falls Church Episcopal staff member prior to the meeting with the time and location of the meeting.

- *Check-in/Check-out Procedure.* All children are subject to a security check-in/check-out procedure for activities at The Falls Church Episcopal. A child must be signed in and out by a parent/guardian. If an adult other than the parent/guardian will pick up the child that must be noted and authorized at sign in. Ministry leaders are encouraged to ask for identification if they do not recognize the adult picking up a child.

- *Discipline Policy.* It is the policy of The Falls Church Episcopal not to administer corporal punishment, even if parents give permission for it. There will be no spanking, grabbing, hitting, or other physical, emotional, or psychological discipline toward children. Workers should consult with ministry leaders if assistance is needed with disciplinary issues (see acceptable conduct sheet).

- *Restroom Policy.*

Children five (5) years of age and younger should utilize a classroom bathroom, if one is available.

- If a classroom bathroom is not available, two (2) adults should escort a group of children to a hallway bathroom. Children should never be taken to the bathroom alone.
- The adults should check the bathroom first to make sure that it is empty, and then allow the children inside.
- The bathroom door should always remain open and the child should be using the stall.
- If the child requires assistance, one adult should prop open the stall door, while the other remains in line of sight at the bathroom entrance.
- The adult assisting the child is to keep the stall door propped while remaining in the line of sight of the other adult. To the best of the adult's ability, the child's privacy should be respected.

For children over the age of five:

- At least two (2) adult males should take boys to the restroom and at least two (2) adult females should take girls.
- The adults should check the bathroom first to make sure that the bathroom is empty and then allow the children inside.
- The adults should then remain outside the bathroom door and escort the children back to the classroom.
- Adults should never be alone with the child in a bathroom with the door closed and never be in a closed bathroom stall with a child. Parents are strongly encouraged to have a child visit the bathroom prior to dropping them off for a class or program.

- *Open Door Policy.* Parents of the children being served as well as the clergy, and professional staff of the church have the right to visit and observe the program at any time, unannounced.

- *Transportation of Children/Youth.* Children/youth may be transported off-site as part of a church sponsored activity provided there is prior written consent from a parent/guardian (most often in the form of a permission slip), and an up to-date participant health form is kept with a responsible adult leader on the trip at all time.

1. Parents and volunteers who are providing transportation must be at least 21 years of age, five (5) years older than their passengers, provide a copy of his/her driver's license, and proof of insurance

for the vehicle being used in addition to the Commonwealth of Virginia required clearances noted earlier in this policy.

2. All transportation is to adhere to the Child Safeguarding Church Policies established by this document, including but not limited to the presence of at least two (2) unrelated adults per each method of transportation for children in 5th grade and below.
3. Once children enter 6th grade, they may be transported in a vehicle with only one (1) adult, who has provided proper clearance information, as long as there is a third-party present in the vehicle that is unrelated to either driver or passenger, who has provided proper clearance information.
4. Drivers must have no record of convictions for the past five years for drunken driving, driving under the influence, driving with a suspended or revoked license, or reckless endangerment.

8. Sick Child and Health Policies

I. At The Falls Church Episcopal, we pride ourselves on keeping our children safe and healthy while they enjoy Cherub's Chapel, Sunday School and Youth Group activities. See Appendix E for the Health and Sickness Guide.

- *Food/Allergy Policy*

- With the rise of life-threatening food allergies in children, snacks and meals should only be provided to children who have a complete permission slip that notes allergy information on file. If the church is providing snacks, all children present should have access to a snack safe for them, or none should be given. In the event that children do not have documentation on file, parents should be asked to provide food and snacks for their children. Due to the rising prevalence of reactions to airborne peanut allergens, foods with peanuts should be eliminated.

- *Medications Policy*

1. It is the policy of The Falls Church Episcopal not to administer either prescription or non-prescription medication to the children under our care. Medications should be administered by a parent at home. Exceptions to the medication policy may be granted in the case of life-saving medications such as an EpiPen, inhaler, or glucose tab with an acceptable documented plan signed by a parent/guardian.
2. In the case of overnight events the medication policy will be modified so that children and youth can receive their medication. Prescriptions in their original bottles with written and signed instructions will be provided to the adult in charge of the trip. Parents/guardians will give written approval to the Falls Church Episcopal to keep, administer or monitor medicine.

- *Confidentiality of Medical Information*
 1. Information regarding the medical conditions of children is confidential and is only made available to the adults responsible for care of children/youth when it impacts care. In the event information about a contagious illness needs to be shared with others who may have been unknowingly exposed to a sick child, the confidentiality of the children and families will be observed.

H. Screening of Non-Church Groups Using Church Facilities

1. Non-Church groups, using church facilities, must obtain a certificate regarding reading of both the Diocesan Policy and the Falls Church Episcopal Policy on Misconduct and Child Abuse Prevention. The leadership of any non-church groups using the church facilities should read this manual and certify that they have done so, and provide a copy of their certification to The Falls Church Episcopal administration. See Child/Youth Protection Covenant Agreement for Outside Groups attached hereto as Appendix C.
2. All such Non-Church Groups, which, as part of their regularly scheduled programs, activities or services, accept responsibility for a child or have regular direct contact with children while assisting with Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, or other independent programs or groups' activities held at The Falls Church Episcopal will be required to complete and provide to The Falls Church Episcopal administration the following:
 - Virginia Child Abuse History Clearance through the Virginia Department of Human Services
 - Virginia State Police Criminal Record Check
 - National Sex Offender Check
 - Signed Participation Covenant Agreement. These groups shall be required to complete and provide The Falls Church Episcopal with a signed Safe Church Covenant Agreement for Outside Groups (Appendix C)
3. They shall also develop and abide by policies consistent with the requirements of this policy. All information will be kept confidential.

I. Overall Policy Administration.

1. *Oversight.* The Falls Church Episcopal clergy and Personnel Committee have oversight of this policy and are responsible, along with the Vestry for insuring that the policy is followed, including adequate training for staff and volunteers on this policy.
2. *Record keeping.* The Parish Administrator shall coordinate efforts to keep accurate, current, and confidential information concerning certification and training records of individuals who may work with children.

3. *Retention.* Certifications and records will be kept on file under lock or passkey for at least five (5) years.

J. Reporting Sexual Misconduct or Suspected Sexual Misconduct

1. **General obligation.** All misconduct or suspected misconduct must be reported to the appropriate law enforcement officials and to the appropriate person (see below) within the Church administration as soon as possible.

2. **Procedural steps.**

- **Report all suspected child abuse or sexual misconduct to Child Protective Services.** Call the statewide toll-free hotline (800) 552-7096 to make the initial report or call the local Social Services office. In reporting to Child Protective Services, it is helpful for the reporter to provide as much of the following as possible: the name and address of the child and the parent or person responsible for his/her care; the child's age, sex, and race; a description of the alleged abuse and neglect, including how long it may have been happening; the name of the school the child attends; the names of other people, especially children, in the home; the reporter's relationship to the child. Report even if you are unable to provide all of the information. The person reporting abuse to Child Protective Services is not required to give his or her name. If you suspect abuse, neglect or exploitation of an adult over age 60, or an incapacitated adult over the age of 18, call the Adult Protective Services hotline of the Virginia Department of Social Services at (888) 832-3858. County-specific contact numbers are as follows:

Falls Church City Child Protective Services at 571.282.4024

Arlington County Child Protective Services at 703.228.1500

City of Alexandria Child Protective Services at 703.746.5800

Fairfax County Child Protective Services Hotline at 703.324.7400

Loudoun County Child Protective Services at 703.771.5437

Prince William County Department of Social Services at 703.792.4200

- **Report within the Church**

- a. *Reporting Misconduct Committed by a Clergy person.* Immediately fill out the forms attached hereto as Appendices A and B, and notify an intake officer by phone or e-mail. The Intake Officers and contact information are listed on the Diocesan *Reporting an Incident* webpage.

- b. *Reporting Misconduct Committed by a Layperson.* Immediately fill out the forms attached hereto as Appendices A and B, and notify the rector or other clergy person on staff of the Layperson's church or of the church of the offended person. The clergy person should then call the bishop's or canon's Office at (800) 346-2373 to plan the appropriate response in the

particular context.

c. Appropriate responses to a report may include one or more of the following:

- If the report involves suspected child abuse or child sexual abuse, the lay person will be placed on administrative leave from all ministries involving children or teens, or which bring the layperson into proximity with children or teens until the matter is appropriately resolved.
- If the report involves suspected abuse or sexual misconduct toward an adult the layperson will be placed on administrative leave from all ministries in which there is one-on-one contact with adults, including Eucharistic visits and pastoral visits, until the matter is appropriately resolved.
- If formal charges of sexual misconduct or abuse are brought against a layperson who is in a position of leadership, for example, a warden, member of the vestry, Diocesan Council delegate, Standing Committee member, Executive Board member or Deputy to General Convention, that person will be placed on administrative leave from the leadership position until the investigation or legal proceedings are complete. These actions are not intended to imply guilt but are intended to create a safe space for all during a difficult time.
- Decisions about when and how to place a lay person on administrative leave are made on a case by case basis in a conversation between the rector of the church and the bishop or canon. Pastoral care for all involved, including the person reported, the person(s) making the report, the victim(s) and the congregation, is vitally important. A plan for pastoral care for all will be developed in consultation with the bishop or canon.

3. After a Report is Made

- The volunteer shall notify the staff person in charge of the activity if he or she has not already done so. The staff person in charge of the activity will immediately notify the Co-Clergy if he or she has not already done so.
- Any incidents involving Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, or an outside group using the church facility, must, in addition to the statutorily required reporting, be reported to the Rector and Associate Rector.

- Individuals under investigation will be required to refrain from all child care/supervisory activities until the incident report is resolved. If the removal of any person from an activity is required, care should be taken to handle this in a discreet manner, recognizing that an investigation is still being conducted.
- The Falls Church Episcopal will comply with the state's requirements regarding mandatory reporting of abuse as the law dictates and cooperate with any investigation by the Commonwealth or local authorities. In the event there is not investigation by the Commonwealth or local authorities, a team will be formed to investigate the circumstances of the incident, acting only in accordance with the Diocese of Virginia, and the insurance company reporting requirement.
- Any person who is not found innocent of the alleged abuse or misconduct will be removed from their position with children/youth.
- The Diocese of Virginia will be notified, along with the insurance company and an incident report will be filed.
- Provide pastoral care for those involved. In some cases, the canon will appoint a diocesan pastoral care team to provide such care.
- Notify the wardens or other appropriate leaders of the congregation.
- Protect identity. The identity of the person or persons who report the incident to the clergy must be protected. The identity of all minors must be protected and disclosed only to those professionally involved.
- Document all actions taken regarding the matter and retain the documentation in a confidential file at the church or institution. File a copy of the documentation with the canon.
- Media inquiries. A diocesan spokesperson will be appointed by the bishop or canon to respond to media inquiries and to advise the congregation on media relations. No statements shall be made by anyone other than the appointed spokesperson.
- Written Statement to the Congregation. The bishop, the canon or another designated person may prepare and present a written statement to the affected congregation, stating the relevant information while maintaining appropriate confidences. The bishop or canon may advise the rector and wardens to prepare and present a written statement to the affected congregation. All written statements, no matter who prepares them, will be read and approved by the chancellor before being

presented.

- Meeting with the Affected Congregation. The bishop, the canon or another designated person may meet with the vestry and/or the congregation to assist the congregation in responding to and dealing with the incident and its aftermath.

Appendix A: Forms for Reporting Suspected Violation of Protection Policy and/or Child Abuse Initial Report

**The Falls Church Episcopal
Report of Suspected Violation of Safe-Church Policy and/or Child Abuse**

Name of person observing or receiving information on suspected violation

Name of victim: _____

Age of victim: _____

Observer’s Statement:

Name of person accused of violation:

Reported to (Staff Member Name, Time, Date):

Notes of report to Staff Member:

Signature of person filling out form: _____

Signature of Staff: _____

Signature of Rector: _____

Date: _____

Appendix B: Rector and Staff Form To be filled out by the Rector or Staff Member:

Date and Time parent/guardian called: _____

Who spoken with and what was said:

Date and time called law enforcement:

Who spoken with and what was said:

Date and Time called Department of Social Services (DSS) toll-free Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline

Reported by and Information Included:

Additional Information:

Note: A copy of this form will be sent to the appropriate personnel of the Diocese of Virginia.

Appendix C: Child/Youth Protection Covenant Agreement for Outside Groups

The Falls Church Episcopal’s purpose for establishing this Agreement with you is to help the church, all church-sponsored and church-affiliated organizations and other organizations using The Falls Church Episcopal’s building or grounds demonstrate our commitment to the physical and emotional safety, and spiritual growth of our children, youth and all adult workers and volunteers. By signing this agreement, you pledge your support of our common endeavor to keep our children and youth safe.

On behalf of the organization named below, I promise and affirm:

- 1. that we will never leave children/youth unsupervised in the room where we are leading or helping with an activity or event. 2 unrelated adults will be there to supervise.
- 2. that we will require employees and volunteers to immediately report any suspected cases of child abuse in accordance with the requirements of law.
- 3. that we will report any behavior seen as abusive or inappropriate to the Rectors of The Falls Church Episcopal
- 4. that we will provide The Falls Church Episcopal with a copy of our written policy that incorporates the assurances provided above.

Organization Name (print) _____

Name of Individual (print) _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Witness _____

Date _____

Appendix D: Guidelines for Electronic Communication and Social Networking in The Falls Church Episcopal Environment

1. Rules Applicable to all Forms of Electronic Communication and Social Networking

- a. Parent's permission must be obtained for any communication with youth on social media.
- b. Two (2) unrelated adults must be monitoring and admins to each account
- c. All groups must be closed and designed for the entire group.
- d. There should never be a point when a youth and one (1) adult should be in a closed conversation.
- e. A church staff member must be included on all church sponsored sites and social media accounts.

2. General Rules of Conduct

- a. Materials posted on church sponsored sites (and/or group pages) are NOT CONFIDENTIAL.
- b. Content deemed inappropriate will be removed from the site or group page.
- c. Clarify rules on a case-by-case basis for social networking groups:
 - i. Appropriate language
 - ii. Eligibility of membership to join a social networking group, e.g., whether you have to be a member of a parish or youth group and whether there are age requirements/restrictions for participation for youth groups.
 - iii. Loss of eligibility of membership and removal from the social networking group, e.g., how and when members will be removed from the group due to moving away, leaving the faith community, becoming too old for youth group, clergy leaving to minister to another parish or exclusion from ministry positions for other reasons.
 - iv. Who how and when may photos be tagged (members identified by name; for example, individuals may tag themselves in photos but should not tag others).
- d. Members must behave appropriately or have their privileges revoked. Examples of inappropriate behavior include bullying, pictures that depict abuse, violence, sexual acts, etc.
- e. All online activity will comply with mandated reporting laws regarding suspected abuse.
- f. 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/or the 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 DCF and/or police.
- g. Inappropriate material that does not raise suspicion that a child has been or will be abused/neglected/exploited should immediately be removed from the site.
- h. Any content that details inappropriate behavior (outside of the bounds of the established behavioral covenant) during a church sponsored event or activity

should be addressed by adult youth leaders and parents.

3. Social Networking

- a. Adults who minister to children and youth are strongly encouraged to set very stringent privacy settings on any social networking profile. Individual personal profiles are to be used to interact with real friends, family and peers. Adults should not submit “friend” requests to minors or youth or accept “friend” requests from minors or youth. Youth may not be able to decline such requests due to the disparity of power between youth and adults.
- b. Adults who want to connect via a social networking website with youth to whom they minister may set up a closed group account that youth may join. Youth requesting to “friend” an adult can then be invited to join this group rather than be accepted as a friend on an adult’s personal profile account. The purpose of these two separate accounts/profiles is to create a line of privacy and maintain healthy boundaries with youth and real family, friends and colleagues.
 - i. Closed groups, but not “hidden” groups, should be used for youth groups (J2A, Rite 13, Confirmation, pilgrimage, mission trips, etc.).
 - ii. Groups should have at least two unrelated adult administrators as well as at least two (2) youth administrators.
 - iii. Invitations to youth to join the group should be made by youth administrators, unless a youth previously asked an adult administrator to invite him/her to join the group.
- c. Social networking groups for youth should be open to parents of current members.
- d. Parents should be informed that the content of youth pages or groups that are not sponsored by the church are NOT within the purview of adult youth leaders.
- e. Adult leaders of youth groups and former youth members who, due to departure, removal from position, or are no longer eligible because they “aged-out” of a program should be immediately removed from digital communication with youth groups via social networking sites, list serves, etc.

4. Publishing/Posting Content Online

- a. Adults are discouraged from participating in any video chats, text chats, blogs or video blogs with youth. Any transcripts of online text chats, video chats, blogs or video blogs should be saved when possible.
- b. Congregations must inform participants when they are being videoed or photographed because church buildings are not considered public spaces.
 - i. All communities of faith should take care to secure signed media release forms from adults and guardians of minor children who will or may participate in activities that may be photographed or videoed for distribution.
 - ii. Photos that are published on church sponsored sites should not include name or contact information for minor children or youth.

5. Email, Texting and Twitter

- a. Email can be an appropriate and effective means of communicating basic factual information such as the time of an event, agenda for a meeting, text of a document, etc.
 - i. Email is not an appropriate communication method for matters that are pastorally or legally sensitive, emotionally charged or require extensive conversation.
 - ii. Humor and sarcasm can be easily misinterpreted in an email.
 - iii. All email users should take a moment to consider the ramifications of their message before clicking on the “send” or “reply to all” button.
- b. Texting should not be done from one (1) adult to a child but rather you should use a closed group chat. Two (2) unrelated adults should be administrators in the chat. Similarly, a closed group twitter is ok.

Appendix E: Health and Sickness Guide

We are dedicated to providing a safe and healthy environment for children, youth, and adults at The Falls Church Episcopal.

1. So that we may do this, we ask for your partnership in keeping your child(ren) home if:

- i. They have a fever of over 100.4 degrees
- ii. Have any symptoms of an upper respiratory infection including cough, runny nose or fever
- iii. Vomiting or diarrhea more than 2 times in the previous 24 hours
- iv. Any new rash that hasn't yet been evaluated by a healthcare provider, especially one that is accompanied by fever
- v. Your child has a diagnosis of strep throat
- vi. Your child has a diagnosis of head lice, scabies or ringworm
- vii. Your child has a diagnosis of chicken pox

b. We look forward to seeing you back! You may return to your favorite activities at TFCE when:

- i. Fever has been gone for 24 hours *without* the use of fever reducing medicine
- ii. Cough/cold symptoms have been absent for at least 24 hours or are improving with the use of over the counter cough/cold medicines
- iii. Vomiting or diarrhea has been absent for 24 hours and your child is able to take fluids and small meals without a recurrence of symptoms
- iv. Rash has been evaluated by a healthcare provider and is determined *not* to be contagious
- v. Strep throat cases may return after 2 doses of antibiotics which are at least 12 hours apart
- vi. Head lice, scabies and ringworm cases may return after the first day of treatment. **Please notify the appropriate classroom staff so that we may discreetly and anonymously alert other parents.*
- vii. Chicken pox cases may return after all chickenpox lesions are scabbed over and *no new lesions* have appeared within the last 24 hours.

2. Suggested Medical?

a. Allergy Questions for Form Does your child have any history of: (check all that apply)?

- Allergies requiring epi pen or other emergent intervention
- Arrhythmia
- Asthma or reactive airway disease
- Autism or autism spectrum disorder
- Colostomy or indwelling urinary catheters
- Depression or anxiety
- Diabetes
- Epilepsy or seizures (other than infantile febrile seizures)

- Feeding tubes
- Heart disease
- Other emotional or behavioral needs
- Thyroid disease