



Diocese of the Rocky Mountains

The Anglican Church in North America

Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

January 2021

To the Clergy, Wardens, Parish Councils, Churches, and People of the Rocky Mountains Diocese,

I commend to you the Diocese of the Rocky Mountains Policy Manual for the Protection of Children.

In a perfect world, we wouldn't need a document like this, but we live in a broken world where the world, the flesh, and the devil seek to corrupt what is beautiful, profane what is holy, destroy what is good, and prey on the vulnerable. The church is not immune to these forces.

One of the things we learned from Rwanda is the importance of "walking in the light" – that bringing things into the light is what banishes the darkness and brings healing and restoration. This document is a reflection of that and a reflection of the commitment of the diocese that we have churches that are soaked in the gospel, bring restoration and life, and make disciples.

This means that there is no room in our churches for abuse (verbal, physical, sexual, spiritual, or neglect). We must do all that we can to prevent abuse and, when there is suspicion of abuse, or an allegation of abuse, take it seriously and deal with it with integrity. This policy applies not only to youth, but to any who are vulnerable.

This policy is necessary reading for all church leaders, including, but not limited to, all affiliated clergy, parish councils, church employees, non-paid staff, and all those who work with youth. Please read this policy carefully. It is vitally important that all congregations follow its requirements and recommendations.

Variances to specific provisions of the policy may be granted by the Bishop or the Diocesan Council with the advice and counsel of the Chancellor of the Diocese.

Grace and Peace,

The Rt. Rev. Ken Ross

Collect prayer:

Almighty God, heavenly Father, you have blessed us with the joy and care of children: Give us calm strength and patient wisdom to train them, that they may love all that is true, and pure and lovely, and of good report, following the example of their savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

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Diocesan Policy on Child Abuse

Everyone who serves the church through educational, pastoral, recreational or other activities is expected to maintain the highest biblical standards in relationships with those to whom they minister, avoiding any form of misconduct. The Diocese will not tolerate any form of abuse involving clergy, staff members, volunteers or other persons. No one who has a civil or criminal record of child maltreatment, including child abuse or child neglect, or who has admitted to prior sexual abuse of a child, will be permitted to serve with children or youth.

Child Abuse Defined

Each state has its own definition of what constitutes child abuse under civil and criminal laws. Every church in the Diocese should know and follow the relevant laws and legal definitions in its jurisdiction. Summaries or legal and reporting regulations can be found at childwelfare.gov via this [link](#). While reliable, each church should ensure that the information provided at this third-party website is up to date, and the Diocese of the Rocky Mountains makes no guarantees as to the accuracy of this site.

For the Rocky Mountain Diocese, child abuse refers to an action or failure to act by a parent, caregiver or person in a position of trust which is not accidental and which harms or threatens to harm a child's physical or mental health or welfare. We use the term "child abuse" as a broad term that covers all of the following:

- Physical abuse: intentional use of physical force against a child that results in – or has a high likelihood of resulting in – harm for the child's health, survival, development or dignity¹.
- Sexual abuse: any form of sexual contact or exploitation in which a minor is being used for the pleasure of the abuser. Acts of sexual abuse include contact-based abuse (such – but not limited to - penetrative intercourse, sexual kissing, sexualized touching or forcing a child to kiss or sexually touch someone else) and non-contact based abuse (such as – but not limited to – asking sexual questions, exposing children to pornography or adult sexual behavior, making sexual or lewd comments toward the child or taking photographs or film of a child for the purposes of sexual gratification by him/herself or others).
- Emotional abuse: Any nonphysical behavior or attitude that controls, intimidates, subjugates, demeans, punishes or isolates another person by using degradation, humiliation or fear.
- Exploitation: The act of using a minor child for profit, labor, sexual gratification,

¹ World Health Organization. "Preventing Child Maltreatment: A Guide to Taking Action and Generating Evidence," 2006. Geneva, Switzerland

or some other personal or financial advantage.

- Neglect: the failure of a child’s caregiver to provide basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter, medical care, education or supervision.

The Diocese Policy Manual for Child Protection applies to anyone working in a staff or volunteer capacity with any child or youth under age 18. Any sexual contact with someone under the age of 18 is considered abuse regardless of the legal age of sexual consent in the state in which the church is located.

The Diocese Policy Manual for Child Protection applies also to vulnerable adults. A vulnerable adult, or an adult at risk, is a person over the age of 18 who is unable to take care of themselves. It can also refer to one who is unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

An adult at risk may therefore be a person who:

- Is elderly and physically disabled due to ill health or cognitive impairment;
- Has a Learning Disability;
- Has a physical disability and / or a sensory impairment;
- Has mental health needs including Dementia or a personality disorder;
- Has a long-term illness / condition;
- Misuses substances or alcohol;
- Is unable to demonstrate the capacity to make a decision relating to their safety and is in need of care and support.

The above list is not exhaustive.²

Every church must also comply with the terms and conditions of its own liability insurance policy.

Roles and Responsibilities

Everyone involved in ministry to children and youth has an important role in ensuring a safe and healthy church.

The Rector is responsible for:

- The overall administration of this policy within your church;
- Knowing the terms and conditions of your particular congregation’s insurance coverage, ensuring that all conditions of your insurance coverage are met (The Diocese assumes no responsibility for a congregation’s non-compliance with its insurance carrier’s policy.);
- Devising a local implementation plan for this policy that takes into account the

² Safeguarding Partnership Board: Adults . “Safeguarding Adults Definitions,” November 2016. https://www.proceduresonline.com/jersey/adults/chapters/p_sg_adults_def.html

- particulars of the church's ministry to children and youth;
- Providing all compliance reports requested by the Diocese (see also "Diocesan Documentation Requirements" on page 14);
 - Reporting to the Bishop's office any allegation of misconduct;
 - Reporting to relevant law enforcement authorities in conformity with applicable law.

Clergy are responsible for:

- Knowing and abiding by the diocesan policies and disciplines;
- Reporting to the Bishop's office any allegation of misconduct;
- Reporting to relevant law enforcement authorities in conformity with applicable law.

Wardens are responsible for:

- Knowing the terms and conditions of your particular congregation's insurance coverage, ensuring that all conditions of your insurance coverage are met and reconciling those conditions with this policy. (The Diocese assumes no responsibility for a congregation's non-compliance with its insurance carrier's policy).

Children and Youth Ministry Leaders are responsible for:

- Overseeing local implementation of this policy;
- Reporting to the Rector any allegation of misconduct (or directly to the Bishop if the allegation involves the rector);
- Reporting to relevant law enforcement authorities in conformity with applicable law. Anyone who suspects a criminal act does not need to ask permission of the church or diocese before contacting law enforcement.

Volunteers and employees are responsible for:

- Complying with all aspects of this policy;
- Reporting to the Ministry Leader or Rector any allegation of misconduct (or directly to the Bishop if the allegation involves the rector);
- Reporting to relevant law enforcement authorities in conformity with applicable law.

The Five-Step Child Protection Process

The Diocese of the Rocky Mountains is committed to supporting congregations in creating a healthy and supportive environment for children and youth through a five-step approach:

1. Screening
2. Training
3. Interacting

4. Monitoring
5. Responding and Reporting

Step 1: Screening

Screening is an effective way to protect children and youth from abuses. The following procedures apply to everyone involved with ministry to children and youth, including volunteers, staff, interns and third party contractors, even for special events and day camps.

Screening Clergy

The diocesan office is responsible for screening all clergy. Careful screening is initially conducted during the ordination or transfer process.

Re-screening of clergy will be conducted by the diocese every two to three years at congregational or individual expense. See next section for requirements.

An initial background check must include the following:

1. Inquiries of all bishops having past or present canonical authority over the individual during the past ten years, all schools attended by the individual during the past five years, and all employers of the individual during the past five years. If the individual has had one employer for over five years, then inquiries will be made of the two most recent employers. In the case of clergy, “employer” shall be the senior wardens of congregations served during the past five years;
2. Credit Bureau Record Check;
3. Motor Vehicle Record Check;
4. Employer and Education History Checks;
5. National Sexual Offender/Criminal Record Check and Database;
6. State Police Criminal Record Check or the equivalent in the applicant’s states of residence;
7. National Criminal Database.

Rescreening Clergy

Rescreening clergy background checks must include the following:

1. Sexual Misconduct/Criminal Record Check and Database;
2. State Police Criminal Record Check or the equivalent in the applicant’s states of residence;
3. National Criminal Database

Clergy/Congregations must use the services of a background screening agency, such as Oxford Document Management Company, MinistrySafe, Protect My Ministry, or other equivalent agency, at congregational/individual expense, to conduct background checks as long as the above requirements are met.

Screening Employees and Interns

Each DRM congregation is required to conduct equivalent background checks of all employees, interns and non-paid staff at church expense. Careful initial screening includes:

1. Conducting National Sexual Offender Registry and Criminal Background checks; checks should be renewed every two years.
2. Conducting personal and professional or educational reference checks
3. Conducting a face-to-face interview

Each congregation should conduct re-screening of employees, interns and non-paid staff every two to three years at church expense. Re-screening may include a basic background check or more, depending on involvement with children and youth.

Screening Volunteers

Each DRM congregation is responsible to screen all volunteers who work with children and youth at church expense. Careful initial screening includes:

1. Requiring a six-month minimum attendance rule for volunteers.
2. Signed volunteer applications
3. Conducting National Sexual Offender Registry and Criminal Background checks; checks should be renewed every two years.
4. Conducting personal and professional or educational reference checks
5. Conduct a face-to-face interview.
6. Signed agreement to comply with Child Protection Policy

Each congregation should conduct re-screening of volunteers who work with children and youth every two to three years at church expense. Re-screening may include a basic background check or more, depending on the volunteer's involvement with children and youth.

Congregations must use the services of a background screening agency, such as Oxford Document Management Company, MinistrySafe, Protect My Ministry, or other equivalent agency, at congregational expense, to conduct background checks as long as the above requirements are met.

Each DRM Congregation must also comply with its insurance carrier's requirements.

Step 2: Training

Those who work with children or youth must be trained to recognize the warning signs of predatory grooming behavior, potential abuse, and become familiar with safe practices and procedures for reporting suspected abuse. The DRM requires the following training:

Reading this Policy

All members of the clergy, employees and volunteers must certify that they have read, understood and will abide by the Diocese Policy for the Protection of Children prior to any contact with children or youth. The acknowledgement form is included on page 15.

Sexual Abuse Prevention Workshop Attendance

- All DRM clergy and staff, whether or not they have direct contact with children and youth and all volunteers who have contact with children and youth must complete the online Sexual Abuse Prevention course and follow-up test provided by Ministry Safe, or other equivalent training approved in advance by DRM. Training includes awareness of abuser characteristics, grooming behaviors, methods to reduce risk and how to respond to allegations.
- In order to stay current, online training by all clergy and staff and all volunteers who work with children and youth must be completed every two years. Every year, each congregation must submit to the DRM office evidence of completed initial training by new ministry workers and re-training by clergy, staff and continuing ministry volunteers. A certificate of completion from the training program will demonstrate compliance with this requirement.
- Every DRM congregation must track and document the training and retraining of its clergy, staff and volunteers at congregational expense. See Diocesan Documentation Requirements (page 14 #3).

Step Three: Interaction

The following procedures will help children and youth feel safe in ministry and help detect problems before they turn into an incident of abuse.

Communication

- All verbal communication with children and youth should be encouraging and constructive.
- Communication should not include provocative or sexual content; encourage a child to keep secrets; imply any sort of privileged relationship between adult and child; or otherwise call into question the adult's intentions toward the child.
- Clergy, staff, and volunteers in children and youth ministries must not use, possess or be under the influence of tobacco products, alcohol, marijuana, or illegal drugs while they are engaged in children or youth ministry activities.

Social Media

- Social media interaction with youth can be an effective way to communicate information about ministry activities and develop positive and supportive relationships with youth. Yet, social media also carries risk of exposing youth to inappropriate material. Clergy, staff and volunteers should not connect on social media with children younger than 13.

Ask parents for permission before connecting with older children (13 or over) on social media. All social media interactions should be focused on the youth's general welfare and/or spiritual development. Always use age appropriate language.

- Clergy, staff and volunteers should use a dedicated social media account for youth ministry use, separate from accounts used to connect with other adult friends. This will avoid accidental exposure to inappropriate content.

Photography

Do not use photos of children and youth without written and signed permission from the parent or guardian.

Physical Interaction

- Any physical contact is for the well-being and safety of the child and not based on the needs of the clergy, staff member or volunteer.
- DRM policy prohibits physical discipline in any form for the behavioral management of children. This includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting or other physical force to restrain or correct children.
- Appropriate discipline of children includes non-physical methods of behavior management. Staff members and volunteers may use physical restraint as a last resort to prevent self-injury by the child or harm to others or property.
- DRM policy prohibits inappropriate physical affection in children and youth ministry, such as: wrestling, tickling, full frontal hugs, kissing on the lips and sitting on laps, slapping the buttocks or any other playful gesture in private areas of the body (except nursery-aged children may sit on laps and be hugged).
- Appropriate physical affection in youth and children's ministry includes handshakes, side hug, high-fives, thumbs-up and fist bumps. Only give physical contact and affection in situations where others are around. Never force physical contact, touch or affection on a reluctant child. A child or youth's preference not to be touched must be respected at all times.
- Staff and volunteers are responsible for protecting children under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by other adults, youth or children.

Restroom Use

- Only screened and trained nursery workers, or the child's parent or legal guardian, will undertake diapering. Diapers should be changed in the plain sight of other nursery workers.
- Only screened and trained nursery workers, or the child's parent or legal guardian, will participate in toilet training efforts with children.
- When a pre-school child needs assistance to use the restroom, a volunteer should wait outside in the hallway or escort the child to the parent.
- Staff members and volunteers should avoid being alone with one child in the restroom or in an enclosed stall.

First Aid and Medication

- If possible, medication should be administered by the child's parents. Medication may be given as authorized in writing by the parent.
- First aid may be given to a child when medically necessary. Parents should be notified whenever first aid is given.

Release of children

- Staff members and volunteers are responsible for all children in their care and must ensure their appropriate supervision and safety.
- At the close of services or activities, children should be released only to parents, legal guardians or other persons designated by parents or legal guardians.
- If a staff member or volunteer is uncertain of the propriety of releasing a child, they should immediately contact their immediate supervisor before releasing the child.

Transportation

- Clergy, staff members and volunteers may be asked to provide transportation to children or youth. Drivers must provide to the church copies of a valid driver's license, vehicle registration and proof of insurance. Only persons over 21 may be allowed to drive children/youth.
- Drivers and passengers must follow all state laws.
- A volunteer or staff member should never be alone in the vehicle with a child or youth.

Step Four: Monitoring

Monitoring helps detect problems before they turn into an incident of abuse and helps adults avoid wrongful allegations of abuse where none has occurred.

- **Follow the two-adult rule:** All children's activities should be supervised by two or more screened and trained adults. Keep interactions with children in full view of others at all times.
- Never leave a child unattended during or following a church activity.
- Keep children in supervised areas.
- Extend an open invitation to parents to visit at any time unannounced.

Step Five: Responding and Reporting

Children and youth ministry leaders are in a position of authority and trust. If misconduct occurs, or there is reason to believe that it has occurred, follow the correct reporting protocols.

- The reporting requirements for each state vary. Each individual church in the DRM should be familiar with the specific laws in their jurisdiction and create a written response plan that is centered on the victim's well-being consistent with those laws. For more information, see childwelfare.gov at this [link](#).
- Document all actions that the church takes in responding and reporting abuse allegation.

Responding to the Victim

- When there is a suspicion or report of abuse, respect the child's privacy by finding an appropriate non-threatening, yet still observable, place to talk. If possible, a staff member, other trained volunteer or responsible adult should join in to listen to the child's account.
- Keep calm. Listen and avoid expressing shock or outrage.
- Let the child know that he/she is believed.
- Assure the child that this was not his/her fault.
- Avoid questions that could make the child feel responsible or that might taint the child's recollection.
- Write down as accurately as possible what the child disclosed.
- Limit discussion about the information to the child's parents and appropriate church and legal authorities as discussed below.

Reporting to Church Authorities

- Immediately notify the Rector (or another person designated in your church's

child abuse reporting procedure).

- The Rector or Bishop should suspend the person accused of abuse from duties. This should be done quietly and quickly.
- Notify the child’s parents or guardian
- Notify the Bishop. The Bishop will notify the diocesan Chancellor. The Bishop will follow the reporting and investigation procedures outlined in the DRM Policy for Prevention and Reporting of Sexual Misconduct.

Reporting to Legal Authorities

- Follow your state’s reporting laws regarding who and where to report. See [childwelfare.gov](#) at this [link](#).
- Notify the church’s liability insurance company. Depending on the type of liability coverage, insurance may pay for legal counsel or be a source of helpful advice.
- Cooperate with any investigation by the police or child protection agencies.

Release of Information

- The Bishop and Chancellor will assist the church in preparing a statement to convey appropriate news to members of the church and to others, as appropriate. Identify a single person to respond to all inquiries.
- Maintain confidentiality of the allegation and investigation to protect the privacy of those involved.
- Offer pastoral care from someone not involved in the allegation and investigation. The victim and his/her family may need additional help.
- Treat the accused with dignity and support.

Home Groups

The DRM and its congregations do not exercise control over home groups, which are small groups meeting in a home for Bible study, worship and fellowship. A church which holds its primary worship service in a home is considered a “church” for the purposes of this policy, not a home group.

The care and protection of children in a home group setting is always the responsibility of the parent(s)/ guardian(s) of each child. In home groups where children are present, leaders are encouraged to read this policy, take child abuse prevention training and follow as closely as possible the provisions outlined in this policy.

Diocesan Documentation Requirements

1. All clergy and staff employees and all volunteers working in children's and youth ministry must complete the Individual Acknowledgement of the Diocese Child Protection policy annually (by December 31 each year).
2. All churches must retain the Individual Acknowledgments indefinitely. These can be stored electronically.
3. Each year (by December 31), all churches must certify to the Bishop that they are in compliance with all the provisions of this Diocese Child Protection Policy and that they are in compliance with adequate insurance coverage. Each church will need to designate an individual (rector, administrator, warden, children's minister, etc.) who will monitor and maintain the following for their clergy, staff, and volunteers: copies of the Individual Acknowledgement forms, child abuse prevention training certificates, and background checks.

Please note, the Diocese of the Rocky Mountains will maintain records for its clergy. Clergy rescreening and retraining documents should be sent electronically to the Diocesan Administrator (admin@rockymountainanglican.org) where they will be electronically stored indefinitely.

Individual Acknowledgement of Child Protection Policy

I certify that:

1. I have read the Diocese of the Rocky Mountains Policy Manual for the Protection of Children.
2. I have read the Child Safety Guidelines of _____ (name of church) and understand my role.
3. I have successfully completed the Sexual Abuse Prevention Training from Ministry Safe (or other training approved by the Diocese) within the past two years. My certificate of Completion is attached.
4. I will abide by the provisions of this policy while I am a volunteer or employee of the church.

I am (circle appropriate group):

Clergy

Employee

Volunteer (Paid or unpaid)

Printed Name

Signature

Date

Each congregation must retain these forms indefinitely. As noted above, each church will need to designate an individual who will monitor and maintain the submission of the following for their clergy, staff, and volunteers: copies of the Individual Acknowledgement forms, child abuse prevention training certificates, and background checks.

Please note, the Diocese of the Rocky Mountains will maintain records for its clergy. Clergy rescreening and retraining documents should be sent electronically to the Diocesan Administrator (admin@rockymountainanglican.org) where they will be electronically stored indefinitely.

Church Certification and Acknowledgement of Child Protection Policy and Insurance Coverage

Each year (by December 31), all churches must certify to the Bishop that they are in compliance with all the provisions of this Diocese Child Protection Policy and that they are in compliance with adequate insurance coverage.

I certify that:

1. _____ (name of church) has been given a copy of the Diocese of the Rocky Mountains Policy Manual for the Protection of Children.
2. the clergy, staff, and volunteers of _____ (name of church) have read, understand, and have submitted Individual Acknowledge forms as described in this policy; will abide by the provisions of this policy; and that these records must be maintained indefinitely in the church office (these may be stored electronically).
3. _____ (name of church) has adequate insurance coverage and is in compliance with said insurance company.

Printed Name of RECTOR

Signature

Date

APPENDIX

Sample Church Implementation Plan

Each church should devise specific implementation plans for all onsite and offsite programming that involves youth and children.

Here is an example of a church implementation plan for young elementary children meeting in a classroom:

Nametags:

- Before children are to participate in this class, each child should have a nametag attached to their clothing that has a specific number; each parent should have a security tag with a matching number.

Two Adults Rule:

- Volunteers must observe the two-adult rule at **all times** so that no adult is ever alone a child. It is preferable that the two adults in the room not be related.
- In the event of an emergency, or accompaniment to the restroom, the classroom door will remain open until the second adult arrives or a parent is enlisted to help.
- Rooms without clear visibility should leave a door open whenever children are present.

Child/Adult Ratio:

- For this classroom, we abide by the ratio of **one adult per eight children**. With two adults present, we can accommodate sixteen students. If you have more than that, you need a third adult, or some children will need to sit in the sanctuary with parents during service.

Restroom Policy:

- In this classroom, children who need to use the restroom during Children's Worship will either be sent to visit the restroom while a volunteer waits outside in the hallway, or a volunteer will escort the child to the parent.
- Children needing a diaper change will be taken to a parent.
- When in doubt, bring child to their parent, and later update their preferences on planning center.

Dismissal:

- At the end of class, parents should pick up their children from an adult standing by the classroom door.
- In order to release a child, the Children's Ministry volunteer must match the code on his/her nametag to the code on the parents' security tag.
- By releasing the students, the volunteer is signing off that they have matched the parent and child security codes.

SAMPLE Children's Ministry Volunteer Protocol

_____ Church values children and desires to reflect God's love to those in our care. We take very seriously our call to provide an environment where we can bring our children to the Savior and allow them to become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. Not only does this environment need to be nurturing, caring and loving, it also needs to be safe. The following preventative procedures and policies are designed to protect each child and adult involved. By implementing an effective prevention program within our church, we create a safe place for all who attend.

All volunteers in Children's Ministry at _____ Church must agree to the following:

1. *Six-Month Rule.* All volunteers must have consistently attended _____ church for six months prior to working with children.
2. *Written Application.* All volunteers must complete the Volunteer Application Form.
3. *Reference Checks.* All volunteers must provide three (3) references.
4. *Background Checks.* All volunteers must authorize permission for a criminal records check.
5. *Annual Recommitment to Child Safety Guidelines.* All volunteers must annually sign the Children's Ministry Volunteer Protocol saying that they have read and agree to abide by the standards outlined.

Child Safety Guidelines

1. Volunteers must be at least 18 years of age. Those under 18 years of age wanting to assist must be 5 years older than the oldest child being supervised and may not be the primary supervisor.
2. Volunteers must observe the two-adult rule at all times so that no adult is ever alone with one child. It is preferable that the adults not be related. In the event of an emergency, the classroom door will remain open until the second adult arrives or a parent is enlisted to help.
3. Rooms without clear visibility should leave a door open whenever children are present.
4. Child to adult ratios should be carefully considered. There should never be less than 2 adults or 1 adult and 1 assistant for any activity.

General rule: 1 adult per 3 children ages 0-2
 1 adult per 8 children ages 3-4
 1 adult per 10 children ages 5-8

5. A medical registration form should be filled out by a parent or guardian for each child at the beginning of each year.
6. According to parent preference (as documented on the Children's Ministry Family Registration form), children who need to use the restroom during Children's Worship will either be sent to visit the restroom while a volunteer waits outside in the hallway, or a volunteer will escort the child to the parent. Children needing a diaper change will be taken to a parent.
7. Parents give their consent to participate when they release their children, during the service, to attend Children's Worship. Parents should pick up their children either from the children's return processional or from the classroom during the passing of the peace. No child will be released from Children's Worship without a parent.

I am in agreement with the Child Safety Guidelines, and will abide by them.

Printed Name / Signature _____

Date _____