

## Model Policy for Parishes

Episcopal Diocese of Western North Carolina

Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse

### Guidelines and Standards for Programs and Activities for Children and Youth

As used in this Policy, “Church Personnel” means anyone working with children or youth either regularly, as a volunteer, or occasionally, as defined in the Diocesan Policies available at [www.diocesewnc.org](http://www.diocesewnc.org) under “Policies/Guidelines/Canons” at “Sexual Misconduct Policies.”

#### Policies

1. All Church Personnel are required to comply with the Episcopal Diocese of Western North Carolina Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse. A copy is in the church office, or may be obtained online at [www.diocesewnc.org](http://www.diocesewnc.org) under “Policies/Guidelines/Canons” at “Sexual Misconduct Policies.” Specifically, all Church Personnel who work with children or youth must obtain required training (Safeguarding God’s Children as found at [www.diocesewnc.org](http://www.diocesewnc.org) under “Policies/Guidelines/Canons” at “How to get Safeguarding God’s Children Training”) and sign and agree to comply with the Code of Conduct for Protection of Children and Youth and the Guidelines for Appropriate Affection.
2. The rector and vestry, consulting with others as is appropriate, are responsible for establishing:
  - a. Ratios for adults and children for every program for children and youth. These ratios will be age specific and appropriate, approved by the rector and vestry and in the minutes of their meeting, and posted in the nursery, Sunday school rooms, Youth Lounge, or other places where programs for children or youth routinely take place. Compliance with the established ratio is required at all times, including activities that occur off church premises.

[Note that alternate ratios are in provided based on research of current standard of care practices. Draw on the expertise in your parish to determine the safe guidelines for your situation, and chose one of these options or insert another.]

**Children:** regardless of ratios, never less than 2 adults:

AGE	<input type="checkbox"/> check to adopt ratio	<input type="checkbox"/> check to adopt ratio	Enter other ratio to adopt
Infants (birth to 12 mos.)	1:4	1:2	
Toddlers (12-24 mos.)	1:6	1:4	
2 year-olds	1:6		

3 year-olds	1:7	1:6	
4 year-olds	1:7	1:6	
5 year-olds	1:8	1:6	
6-8 year-olds	1:10	1:8	
9-14 year-olds	1:12	1:10	

**Youth:** never less than 2 adults.

1-16 youth: 2 adults

16+: 2 adults to 8 youth

- b. Age-appropriate procedures to ensure the safety of children and youth using restrooms, showers, or baths.

Recommended procedure (which may be adopted by checking the box):

All diapering will be done in a designated, semi-private, visual/auditory accessible area of the nursery.

Sunday school teachers will solicit written parental instructions regarding a child's ability to use the restroom.

Subject to parental instructions, Church Personnel will accompany children under 6 years of age to the restroom and assist as necessary. For children under 5, stall doors will not be closed when the adult is assisting. For children 5-6, stall doors will be closed only when the child requests it.

Subject to parental instructions, for children 6 years and older, a church worker can accompany the child and wait outside, or the child may be accompanied by a one or more children of the same sex (buddy system). Supervising Church Personnel will monitor to make sure children are not out of the classroom for an excessive amount of time and follow-up as appropriate. Adults accompanying a single child will strive to remain in visual and auditory contact with another adult or group of youth.

- c. Procedures to ensure that infants and children under six (6) years old are released only to their parents or legal guardians or those designated by them.

Recommended procedure (which may be adopted by checking the box):

Church Personnel will solicit instructions in writing from parents identifying people to whom a child may be released.

- d. An up to date list of approved congregation-sponsored programs for children and youth and inappropriate activities (such as showing youth “R” or “NR” movies) to be maintained in the church office or other place where church records are kept and will be given to Church Personnel working with children and youth.
3. The ratios and policies referred to in #2 above will be made part of the minutes of the vestry meeting at which they are adopted, will be provided to everyone who routinely works with children and youth, and will be posted in a conspicuous place in the parish.
4. Church Personnel are not permitted to develop new activities for children and youth that do not comply with the parish policies referred to in #2 above. In the event that there are no policies in place, or the Church Personnel propose an activity that is outside the policy, written approval must be obtained from the rector or canonical equivalent. The rector will consider whether the plan for a new activity is appropriate and includes adequate adult supervision.
5. Any adult working with children or youth is prohibited from being alone with a child or youth or multiple children or youth where other adults cannot easily observe them.
6. An adult over the age of 21 must directly supervise anyone under the age of 18 and be physically present during all activities. Youth may not supervise youth.
7. When supervising or assisting private activities such as dressing, showering or diapering infants or children, Church Personnel will remain in an area observable by other adults or work in pairs.
8. Where practical, at least two unrelated Church Personnel must supervise activities. When both boys and girls are participating, male and female adults must be present.
9. No person will be allowed to volunteer to routinely work with children or youth until the person has been known to the clergy and congregation for at least six months.
10. Church Personnel are prohibited from the use, possession, distribution, or being under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or the misuse of legal drugs while participating in or assisting with programs or activities specifically for children or youth.
11. Parents or guardians must complete written permission forms before Church Personnel transport children and youth for a church sponsored activity.
12. Church Personnel will respond to children and youth with respect, consideration and equal treatment, regardless of sex, race, religion, sexual orientation, culture or

socio-economic status. Church Personnel will portray a positive role model for children and youth by maintaining an attitude of respect, patience, and maturity. They will avoid even the appearance of favoritism.

13. Love and affection are part of church life and ministry. There are many ways to demonstrate affection while maintaining positive and safe boundaries with children and youth. Some positive and appropriate forms of affection are listed below:

- Age appropriate hugs.
- Pats on the shoulder or back.
- Handshakes.
- "High-fives" and hand slapping.
- Verbal praise.
- Touching hands, faces, shoulders and arms of children or youth.
- Arms around shoulders.
- Holding hands while walking with small children.
- Sitting beside small children.
- Kneeling or bending down for hugs with small children.
- Holding hands during prayer.
- Pats on the head when culturally appropriate.

14. The following forms of affection are considered inappropriate with children and youth in a ministry setting. Many of them are the behaviors child molesters use to groom children/youth for later molestation and are used to acclimate parents to certain kinds of behavior, therefore dismissing the warning signs of sexual abuse.

These can be considered, in-and-of themselves, sexual abuse.

- Inappropriate or lengthy embraces.
- Kissing on the mouth.
- Holding children over three years old on the lap (unless the child is distraught for reasons other than the adult's behavior).
- Touching bottoms, chests or genital areas other than for appropriate diapering or toileting of infants and toddlers.
- Showing affection in isolated areas such as bedrooms, closets, staff only areas or other private rooms.
- Occupying a bed with a child or youth
- Touching knees or legs of children or youth.
- Wrestling with children or youth.
- Tickling children or youth.
- Piggyback rides.
- Any type of massage given by a child or youth to an adult.
- Any type of massage given by an adult to a child or youth.
- Any form of unwanted affection.
- Comments or compliments (spoken, written, or electronic) that relate to physique or body development. Examples would be, "You sure are developing," or "You look really hot in those jeans."
- Snapping bras or giving wedgies or similar touch of underwear whether or not it is covered by other clothing.
- Giving gifts or money to individual children or youth.
- Private meals with individual children or youth out of public view.

15. One-to-one counseling with children or youth will be done in an open or public place where private conversations are possible but occur in full view of others.
16. Church Personnel are prohibited from dating or becoming romantically involved with a child or youth.
17. Church Personnel are prohibited from having sexual contact with a child or youth.
18. Church Personnel are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, videos, films, clothing etc.) on church property or in the presence of children or youth except as expressly permitted as part of a pre-authorized educational program.
19. Church Personnel are prohibited from using the Internet to view or download any sexually oriented materials on church property or in the presence of children or youth.
20. Church Personnel are prohibited from discussing their own sexual activities, including dreams and fantasies, or discussing their use of sexually oriented or explicit materials such as pornography, videos or materials on or from the Internet, with children or youth.
21. Church Personnel are prohibited from using obscene language or having sexually oriented conversations with or around children or youth.
22. Church Personnel are prohibited from sleeping in the same beds, sleeping bags, tents, hotel rooms (or other rooms) with children or youth. Familial relationships are the only exception (ex. parent/child, brother/sister, mother/daughter).  
  
It is acceptable to have multiple adults sleep with a group of children or youth participating in an open space such as a church basement or camp lodge.
23. Church Personnel are prohibited from dressing, undressing, bathing, or showering (or any other questionable activity) in the presence of children or youth.
24. Church Personnel are prohibited from using physical punishment in any way for behavior management of children and youth. No form of physical discipline is acceptable. This prohibition includes, but is not limited to: spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force. Physical force or restraint may only be used to stop a behavior that may cause immediate harm.  
  
Withholding food/sustenance is also a prohibited form of discipline.
25. Church Personnel are prohibited from using harsh language, degrading punishment, or mechanical restraint such as rope or tape for behavior management.
26. Church Personnel are prohibited from participating in or allowing others to conduct any hazing activities relating to children's or youth ministry or camp activities.

27. When exceptions to these guidelines must be made, they should be reported to the supervisor of the Church Personnel as soon as possible.

28. When Church Personnel witness, or learn of a violation of this Policy or the Policies of the Diocese of Western North Carolina, the Church Personnel must report those violations as specified in the Policies of the Diocese as soon as possible.

Approved by the rector and vestry of \_\_\_\_\_, this \_\_\_ day  
of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_

Secretary of the Vestry

*When signed, this form should be sent to the Bishop Henry Center marked, "Safeguarding Compliance" at  
900B CentrePark Dr.  
Asheville, NC 28805*

*When the ratios and policies referred to in #2 are approved by the vestry, that document, signed by the rector or secretary of the vestry, should be sent to the Bishop Henry Center marked, "Safeguarding Compliance."*