



# ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF ALL NATIONS

THE RIGHT REVEREND DR. FELIX C. ORJI  
470 EAGLE DR.  
EL PASO, TEXAS 79912 • PH (915) 204-7509  
E-MAIL: BISHOPFELIXORJI@AOL.COM

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To the Clergy & Laity of the Anglican Diocese of All Nations

Subject: Protection of Children

*(Authority Anglican Anglican Diocese of All Nations Constitution, Article II)*

March 6, 2024

Greetings in the Name of the Lord!

**In accordance with this Policy, the following is applicable and required:**

- Jesus teaches clearly that children are of great value to His Kingdom (Matthew 18:1-6). Caring for our children and youth is a sacred trust.
- It is our responsibility as Christian adults to provide a safe place for children and youth to grow in the nurture and stature of the Lord. They must not fear being hit or touched in an inappropriate manner. Unfortunately, sexual abuse is a real threat, especially to the most vulnerable and marginalized children and teenagers. Statistics regarding sexual abuse and misconduct toward minors in church settings are distressing, and we must do what is prudent to keep our children safe. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, sexual abuse affects 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 13 boys in their childhood. Religious institutions, which commonly rely on volunteers and hold a high degree of trust, are especially susceptible to allegations of child sexual abuse.<sup>1</sup>
- Abuse of any kind significantly damages an individual and can cause devastating effects that last a lifetime. Research suggest that men and women who were abused as minors tend to have difficulty forming and maintaining healthy relationships<sup>2</sup>, and often struggle to see themselves worthy of God's love and saving power through Jesus' death and resurrection<sup>3</sup>.
- Every state has laws regarding the safety of children, physical abuse, sexual abuse, and sexual misconduct toward minors. We are to submit to the government in authority over us and should give no reason for our integrity to be questioned. There are also civil penalties for willfully failing to follow the law.

**Responsible Authority:**

The Bishop, in cooperation with the Diocesan Board, is responsible for maintaining the Diocesan Policy for the Protection of Children in accordance with the canons of the Diocese. From time to time, but not less than annually, the Board will review and, if necessary, revise the policy in light of practical experiences, medical and other scholarly research, legal developments, and other relevant considerations.

**Responsibility for implantation:**

The Rector has overall responsibility for administration of this policy within the church he leads, and for providing all reports requested by the Diocese. In the absence of a Rector, the Priest-in-Charge and/or the Senior Warden will be responsible. Duties may be delegated, except where noted.

A congregation's adoption of written standards of conduct may be required by insurers as a condition of coverage. This Policy and its related procedures are not a substitute for understanding and complying with the conditions of a congregation's insurance coverage, and the Diocese assumes no responsibility for a congregation's non-compliance with its own insurance carrier's policy.

The Vestry of each congregation within the Anglican Diocese of All Nations (ADAN) shall adopt a policy regarding the protection of children and prevention of child abuse that reflects both the statutes of the state or territory in which it is located and the principles set forth in this Diocesan Policy.

**The Diocesan Policy:**

The term "child abuse" is defined for this policy as acts committed by a parent, caregiver, person in a position of trust interacting with a minor, or any other individual that are intentional and which harm or threaten to harm a child's physical or mental health or welfare, and may include any or all of the following:

- physical and/or mental abuse;
- physical and/or mental neglect; and
- sexual abuse and/or exploitation.

**NOTE:** *Each state, province, and territory has statutes that define "abuse," or "child abuse," or "abuse toward minors." Each congregation shall fully understand and comply with the statutes and laws of the jurisdiction in which it is located.*

ADAN will not tolerate any form of child abuse involving clergy canonically resident in the Diocese; any seminarian or person at any stage of seeking holy orders in the Diocese; any lay employee or volunteer of the Diocese or its congregations; or any other person who might interact with children or youth in a congregational or diocesan setting.

No one in the employment or volunteer service of the Diocese or its congregations:

- who has a civil or criminal record of physical abuse, sexual abuse, or sexual misconduct of any kind toward a minor or adult; or
- who has admitted committing prior such acts toward a minor or adult; or
- who (except where inquiry is prohibited or limited by applicable laws and regulations) has been diagnosed with a paraphilic psychological condition, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, including but not limited to pedophilia, voyeurism, or exhibitionism; will be permitted to serve with children or youth.

To help ensure this, all individuals seeking employment or to volunteer in a ministry working with children or youth must be screened according to the procedures outlined below.

All who serve the church through educational, pastoral, recreational, administrative (including vestry), or other activities are expected to maintain the highest Biblical standards in relationships with those to whom they minister, avoiding any form of misconduct, including child abuse. Those who work with children and youth are also expected to be alert to signs of child abuse by parents, peers,

or other people in a child or youth's life, and to follow proper reporting procedures for their respective states or territories. To help provide adequate common understanding of proper boundaries and signs of abuse, all such Employees and Volunteers shall be trained according to the procedures outlined below.

In addition, the leader responsible for each educational, pastoral, recreational or other program involving children or youth shall draft a Supervisory Plan detailing those measures in place to keep children and youth safe and to satisfy diocesan standards for supervision. A copy of this Supervisory Plan shall be shared with all Clergy, Staff, or Volunteers participating in the ministry, program, or activity.

Known sexual offenders, those who self-disclose a history of sexual misconduct, and those who self-disclose a struggle with sexual attraction toward minors will not be excluded from congregations in ADAN without first consulting the Chancellor and the Bishop. Should such an individual wish to participate in the life of a church, the Clergy shall prohibit him or her from any contact with minors and shall require (except as otherwise directed by the church's legal counsel) said individual to sign a contract that details expectations, defines boundaries and off-limits locations, and establishes appropriate supervision for the offender while on church premises or at church activities. Where appropriate, the Rector shall consult with said individual's probation or parole officer to assure that supervision and reporting requirements have been, and are being, met. The church shall have a plan in place to deal with any violations of the contract.

A "home group" or "small group" meeting in a home for Bible study, prayer, and fellowship is not under the oversight of the Diocese or its congregations. The care and protection of children in such settings is always the responsibility of the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of each child present, as well as of the leader of the group in question. Nevertheless, the Diocese strongly recommends that home group leaders become familiar with, and be trained in accordance with, this Policy, develop Supervisory Plans that ensure child supervision by two or more screened and trained adults, child-proofed environments, and suitable procedures for changing diapers and for children's use of restrooms as though this Policy was in full force and effect in the homes in question.

Congregations shall help keep children safe by:

- posting photos of minors on the church's website, social media accounts, or downloadable print publications only if written parental consent is obtained beforehand; and
- posting personal identification information for minors on-line only if written parental consent is obtained beforehand; and
- ensuring that the church's website is COPPA-compliant.

Should an incident of child abuse occur, the Diocese and the congregation shall respond in a manner that promotes healing for the victim, the offender, the loved ones of both parties, and the congregation. Such measures will include timely communication with lay leadership and the congregation. The Diocese and its parishes shall, at a minimum, comply with all applicable statutes and laws regarding the reporting of known and/or suspected cases of child abuse.

**Screening and Training Procedures** – the Screening and Training Requirements in Table 1 specifies what is required for Clergy of the Diocese, Lay Employees, Interns, Fellows, Day Camp Staff, Wardens, Vestry Members, and Lay Volunteers who work with children and youth. These requirements are explained below.

**Background Checks** – national and state sex offender registry and criminal background checks shall be completed on a regular basis on all employees (regardless of position) and “volunteers” as defined at the beginning of this policy. Before a background check is run, prospective workers will be asked to sign an authorization form allowing the church to run the check. If an individual declines to sign the authorization form, she/he will be unable to work with children. Every potential staff and volunteer should go through the same screening process.

We recognize that there may be times when it is necessary or desirable for babysitters (paid or volunteer) who are themselves under age 18 to assist in caring for children during programs or activities. The following guidelines apply to teenage workers: must be at least age 14; must be screened as specified above; and must be under the supervision of an adult and must never be left alone with children.

All background checks expenses shall be covered by the congregation.

**NOTE:** *Each state has prescribed which background checks are required in order to work with minors in a religious setting. Some states, for example, require a fingerprint-based FBI check. Procedures for completing these state-required background checks can be found on official state-government webpages.*

**Personal Screening Statement** – the statement used must include the definition of child abuse provided in this Policy must include a Signed Policy Acknowledgment, and ask whether the applicant and/or any member of the applicant’s household:

- has ever been arrested for, or convicted of, any crime involving child abuse or any crime of sexual misconduct, or been found to have abused or neglected a child by a family court or other civil domestic court for the protection of children;
- has ever had such a conviction expunged;
- has ever been charged with child abuse or neglect in a civil proceeding;
- has ever committed an act of child abuse or neglect;
- has ever been diagnosed with any paraphilic psychological condition, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, including, but not limited to, pedophilia, voyeurism, or exhibitionism; or
- is now, or has ever been, a registered sex offender in any state or province.

Every category of person included in Table 1 must have a signed statement on file at the local church acknowledging that he or she has read and understood ADAN Policy for the Protection of Children and his or her respective church’s policy concerning the same (if different from the diocesan policy). The ADAN Policy is the minimum standards required, individual church policies may exceed these standards.

**Ministry Safe Training** – Ministry Safe is an extensive safety system designed to reduce the risk of child sexual abuse in a congregation. This program is considered the minimum standard for such training programs. All Clergy, Lay Employees, and Lay Ministry Volunteers (that are over seventeen (17) years old, regardless of their position) are required to complete Ministry Safe training every three (3) years. Since Ministry Safe is an on-line service, individuals can watch the course video and take the included test when convenient. Be sure to note that some features within Ministry Safe may need to be customized to state requirements before using. Find more information at [www.ministrysafe.com](http://www.ministrysafe.com).

**Church-Specific Training** – individual congregations should have regular training on how child abuse prevention standards will be applied to specific groups in specific settings (to include the preparation of written Supervisory Plans). It is recommended that annual training (prior to children and youth program launches) be conducted to refresh awareness of existing standards as well as to explain what changes, if any, have been made to the Policy for the Protection of Children during the preceding year.

**Church-Specific Prevention Program** – each congregation shall make information available to parishioners regarding how to prevent child abuse, and should have a regularly-scheduled presentation regarding child abuse prevention that is appropriate for parents and children to attend.

**Procedures for Adults Interacting with Children and Youth** – every effort shall be made to have at least two adults working together with children. Private (i.e., out of the sight and hearing of other adults) face-to-face interaction between an adult and a child not his or her own shall be avoided. Adults initiating telephone calls with children or youth shall do so in the presence and hearing of another adult. Except in emergency situations, adults who receive telephone calls from children or youth (who are not in the presence and hearing of another adult) shall terminate those calls as quickly as possible, making appropriate arrangements for such additional communication as may be necessary.

Adults who send e-mails, text messages, or other social media messaging to children or youth shall always copy the appropriate ministry leader and/or a designated member of the clergy.

**Communication** (verbal, text, e-mail, and social media messaging):

- Be positive, uplifting, encouraging, and constructive, aiding in the spiritual growth and development of children and youth;
- Avoid harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating speech;
- Refrain from swearing or other coarse language;
- Refrain from commenting on children's and youth's bodies;
- Direct concerns about children to parents, legal guardians, the appropriate ministry leader, or clergy;
- Avoid discussion of sexually-oriented topics except where age-appropriate and Rector-approved (or designee-approved) materials are being used in order to address human sexuality, sexual abuse prevention, and/or sexual purity (such materials should be made available for review to parents beforehand, and an opt-out should be allowed for those whose parents have concerns);
- Refrain from discussing inappropriate or explicit information about personal relationships, dating experiences, or sexual activity;
- Report to the appropriate ministry leader or clergy any sexually-oriented communication initiated by a minor, or by another person toward a minor (follow through with any state-required reporting if necessary!);
- Refrain from connecting with minor students on social media; and
- Model appropriate personal interactions when connected to youth on social media.

## **Social Media**

- Facebook and all social media avenues are important ways for youth ministry staff and volunteer leaders to connect with students. Their world is often constructed around social media. Having personal interactions in this venue allows adults to model appropriate behavior in social media, and it forms valuable connections with students.
- ADAN strongly recommends that each church have a proactive policy for social media and other forms of electronic communication in the context of children's and youth ministry. Clergy, staff members, and volunteers shall refrain from connecting with students on social media when students are younger than the minimum age as established by each social media outlet (for example, Facebook's minimum age is currently 13).

## **Physical Interaction**

### **Physical contact:**

- Physical contact must be for the benefit of the child – never for the emotional needs of the adult
- Physical contact should not be forced on a reluctant child
- Physical contact should always occur in observable (i.e., public) places
- Avoid even the appearance of wrongdoing

### **Discipline:**

- Physical discipline of any kind shall be prohibited (including, but not limited to, spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, and other forms of physical force used for retaliation or correction)
- Acceptable methods of discipline include time-outs and other non-physical strategies
- If child or youth behavior requires physical restraint to prevent self-injury or harm to others or to property, the incident must be reported immediately to parents, Children's Ministry Director, Youth Pastor, and/or clergy

### **Physical affection:**

- Appropriate physical affection includes but is not limited to: high-fives, handshakes, fist bumps, thumbs up, pats on head or back, side hugs, and smiling
- Inappropriate physical affection includes but is not limited to: wrestling, tickling, sitting in laps (except for nursery-aged children), kissing on lips, and full-frontal hugs
- Inappropriate touching and displays of affection are forbidden, and should be reported immediately in accordance with the church's policy for protecting children

### **Photography:**

- Photos of children are not to be used contrary to parental wishes. Churches should refrain from posting any personally identifying information about children pictured online or in print publications without prior parental permission.
- Any concern can easily be handled by including a consent statement on programming registrations that are signed by the parent/guardian.

## **Calls of Nature**

### **Diapers:**

- Only a child's parents, legal guardian, or screened, trained individuals identified in writing by the child's parents or legal guardian shall change diapers for either gender
- Children and Youth Ministry leaders will work with parents of special needs individuals wearing diapers in order to devise the best plan for them

### **Toilet training:**

- Only a child's parents, legal guardian, or screened, trained individuals identified in writing by the child's parents or legal guardian shall participate with parents in toilet training efforts
- No child should be forced to toilet train

### **Bathroom use:**

- Preschool children should not be left unattended in bathrooms (i.e., bathroom door should be open)
  - If program staff assists child in stall, stall door must be partially open
  - If needed, children should be assisted in straightening clothing before returning to areas with other children
  - Bathroom "accidents" should be handled in a reassuring manner
- Elementary children should receive only the minimum amount of help needed
  - Child uses toilet in stall alone, with staff standing in hallway with foot in bathroom door to monitor and verbally assist as needed
  - For children over the age of five, at least one adult male should take boys to the restroom and at least one adult female should take girls. The worker should check the bathroom first to make sure that the bathroom is empty, and then allow the children inside. The worker should then remain outside the bathroom door and escort the children back to the classroom. For the protection of all, workers should never be alone with a child in a bathroom with the door closed and never be in a closed bathroom stall with a child.

### **Sexually-Oriented Materials:**

- Staff members and volunteers may employ (subject to limitations imposed by the Rector or Rector's designee) age-appropriate materials when leading discussions dealing with human sexuality/sexual abuse prevention/sexual purity.
- Any prospective material should normally be made available for review for the parents of participants. Prior to introducing these materials, notice should normally be provided to parents in order to allow an opt-out should there be concerns or objections.

### **Medical Aid**

- If possible, medication should be administered by the child's parent.
- Medication may be given to a child by a staff member or volunteer as authorized by the parent. The medication, including over-the-counter medication, must be in the original packaging.
- When medically necessary, medication or first aid may be given to a child by a staff member or volunteer consistent with the Supervisory Plan.
- Parents should be notified whenever medication or first aid has been administered.

## **Transportation**

- Staff members and volunteers may from time to time be in a position to provide transportation for children. The following guidelines should be strictly observed when workers are involved in transporting children:
  - Adult volunteer drivers must provide to the church copies of valid driver's licenses, vehicle registration, and proof of insurance.
  - No one under age 25 may drive vehicles rented by a church unless explicitly allowed by the rental agreement.
  - No drivers under age 25 may drive church-owned vehicles unless explicitly covered by the church's auto insurance policy. Churches are advised to consult with their insurance provider regarding the minimum age for adult drivers. Under no circumstances should anyone under the age of 18 be allowed to drive children/youth as part of an event.
  - It is understood that the adult driving the child must have undergone a background check including a DMV record check.
  - Use of child safety seats that meet federal and state standards is required.
  - Drivers and passengers must follow airbag age/weight regulations per specific vehicle guidelines.
  - At no time shall there be one adult and one child traveling in a vehicle (except in a parent/child, other familial, or emergency situation, or local variance approved by the Bishop). Automobiles will have either one driver and two or more participants or two adults and any number of children (within the seat belt limitations of the vehicle; seatbelts are ALWAYS required). If there is an extenuating circumstance causing only one adult and one child to travel together in an automobile, permission must be obtained from the child's parent or legal guardian. This permission should be written and signed by the parent/guardian or documented by the volunteer if only verbal consent is obtainable. The child or youth must be transported in the back seat of the vehicle in such circumstances.
  - No cell phones, including hands-free devices, may be utilized by the driver while driving church-owned vehicles, except in an emergency.
  - Children should be transported directly to their destination. Unauthorized stops to a non- public place should be avoided. Stops for meals, refueling, and restroom breaks should be done as a group. Staff members and volunteers should avoid transportation circumstances that leave only one child in transport.
  - Staff members and volunteers should avoid physical contact with children while in vehicles.

## **General Behavior**

- Refrain from use, possession, or being under the influence of tobacco products, alcohol, prescription medications not prescribed by a doctor, or any illegal drugs while in church facilities, while traveling with or in the presence of children or their parents, during church-sponsored activities, or while working with or supervising children
- Refrain from possession of obscene or pornographic materials (including on electronic devices) while in church facilities, while traveling with or in the presence of children or their parents, during church-sponsored activities, or while working with or supervising children



- Refrain from engaging in any type of bullying while working with or supervising children, including verbal, physical, and cyber-bullying
- Refrain from using or openly carrying firearms while working with children
- Wear appropriate attire while working with children
- Never be nude in the presence of children or youth; in situations where changing clothes or showering are necessary (such as on retreats or mission trips), the Supervisory Plan should make provision for adults to bathe and dress privately
- Treat seriously all suspicions and/or reports of child abuse and/or neglect
- If anyone is in immediate danger of serious bodily injury or death, and for other emergencies, call 911

**Table 1: Screening and Training Requirements**

	<b>Diocesan Clergy</b>	<b>Lay Employees</b>	<b>Interns, Fellows, Day Camp Staff</b>	<b>Lay Ministers and Volunteers Serving with Children or Youth</b>
<b>National Sexual Offender Registry and Criminal Background Check</b>	Every 5 years; filed by diocesan office	Every 5 years	Every 5 years	Every 5 years
<b>Any state-required background checks for those in religious institutions working with children or youth</b>	Every 5 years; filed by diocesan office	Every 5 years	Every 5 years	Every 5 years
<b>Reviewing signed job or volunteer applications</b>	When applicable	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Reference checks</b>	Personal and professional	Personal and professional	Personal and professional	Personal, if applicable

**Face-to-face interviews** Yes

<b>Personal Screening Statement</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Six-month minimum attendance</b>	Not required	Not required	Not required	Yes, except where the Bishop has granted a variance
<b>Signed Acknowledgement of Diocesan and Church Policies</b>	Yes		Yes	Yes
<b>Ministry Safe Sexual Abuse Prevention Course online or another diocesan- approved training workshop</b>	Every 2 years; certificate of completion on file with Diocese		Every 2 years; certificate of completion on file with church	Every 2 years; certificate of completion on file with church

<b>Church-specific training</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Copy of valid driver's license, vehicle registration, DMV record, and proof of auto insurance</b>	Anyone who drives minors for a church-sponsored activity	Anyone who drives minors for a church-sponsored activity	Anyone who drives minors for a church-sponsored activity	Anyone who drives minors for a church-sponsored activity

### **Supervisory Plans for On-Site Activities & Events**

- On-site supervisory plans should include:
  - A list of the personnel responsible for running the activity
  - The details of the registration process and registration form for the activity
  - A description of the physical environment in which the activity will occur
  - A policy for bathroom procedures related to the specific activity or the general church restroom procedures
  - Procedures for first aid and medication related to the specific activity or the general policies of the church related to first aid and administration of medication
  - A policy for reporting of discipline concerns
  - Instructions for the release of children related to the specific activity or the general policies of the church related to the release of children

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- Off-site supervisory plans should include:
  - A list of the personnel responsible for running the activity
  - The details of the registration process and registration form for the activity
  - A description of the physical environment in which the activity will occur
  - A plan for off-site transportation to and from the activity
  - A plan for dining arrangements related to the activity
  - A policy for bathroom procedures related to the specific activity
  - A plan for showering arrangements
  - A plan for sleeping arrangements
  - Procedures for first aid and medication related to the specific activity or the general policies of the church related to first aid and the administration of medication
  - A policy for reporting discipline concerns
  - Instructions for the release of children related to the specific activity or the general policies of the church related to the release of children

### **Dressing & Showering**

- Staff members and volunteers should never be nude in the presence of children in their care.
- In the event there is a situation that may call for or contemplate the possibility of nudity (i.e., changing clothes during a pool party, a weekend or overnight retreat, etc.), the Children's Ministry Director or Youth Pastor will detail procedures for showering or changing clothes in the supervisory plan for the scheduled event.

### **Adult: Child Ratio**

The following is the recommended ratio of adults to children (recommendation of ADAN, but the parish is responsible for complying with all state guidelines):

<b>Age</b>	<b>2 adults up to</b>	<b>One additional adult for every additional</b>
Infants	8 children	1-4 infants
Young Toddlers	10 children	1-5 toddlers
2 & 3 year olds	16 children	1-8 children aged 2-3 years
4 years	20 children	1-10 children aged 4 years old
School age	30 children	1-15 school aged children

### **Prepare in Advance**

#### **Know the Law in Your State**

- State laws generally require that certain categories of persons responsible for the care or treatment of children report to state authorities when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused or neglected or is in danger of abuse or neglect. The specific laws, including specific requirements, vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Some states require any person having cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health and welfare has been or will be adversely affected by abuse or neglect to report immediately to authorities. Other states require only those who have special occupations, such as nurses, counselors, teachers, physicians, law enforcement officers, or the like, to report suspected cases of abuse.
- Every church in ADAN should be familiar with, and every person responsible for the care of children in the church should be made aware of, the applicable child abuse reporting requirements and procedures in that jurisdiction.
- Each church in the Diocese should review the applicable laws in its jurisdiction<sup>1</sup> and should create a written response plan that is consistent with those laws.

#### **Have a “Procedures Policy” in Place**

- In addition to complying with any applicable legal requirements, churches should have in place appropriate procedures plan (even if only a very brief one) for reporting any suspected mistreatment of or injury to a child and any suspicious or unusual information about a child. It is critical to be prepared in advance by adopting an appropriate plan and following that plan if an incident or allegation of child abuse occurs.
- The plan should identify the appropriate person(s) (e.g., Rector, Senior Warden) to contact in the case of suspected child abuse. It may include a “response team” of individuals instructed with proper response mechanisms, along with additional procedures to implement throughout the church in responding to the allegation.
- The plan also should designate other persons who may receive such a report if the Rector or Senior Warden is the person who is the subject of the allegations or is otherwise suspected of having committed abuse or neglect. Such internal reporting allows church leaders to determine whether a legal reporting obligation has been triggered, whether further information is needed, and/or whether pastoral or other care for children and others should be offered.

**When dealing with the media:**

- Identify a single person to respond to all inquiries (media or otherwise), such as a specially trained management person.
- Instruct all other workers politely to direct all inquiries to that person.
- Have an approved, prepared statement to answer media inquiries and to convey news to members of the church. Such a statement should normally be reviewed by the church's legal counsel.
- Do not release any information until the church has solidly confirmed its factual content.
- Safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of all involved by not releasing names or other identifying information, especially that concerning minors.

Have in place appropriate *internal procedures and mechanisms* for reporting to appropriate church leaders any suspected child abuse or neglect, any other suspected mistreatment of or injury to a child, and any suspicious information involving a child.

**Purchase a Rider on the Insurance Policy, Where Applicable**

- Unfortunately, most insurance policies do not generally cover sexual misconduct or negligent hiring/supervision in sexual abuse situations. Separate “riders” can be purchased, although some require strict preconditions to insurance coverage like screening, awareness, and prevention training.

**With an Accusation Deal Appropriately with All Individuals Involved and Offer Pastoral Care**

- One of your church's primary missions is sharing the love of God with children. Offer whatever pastoral care and other help is appropriate and available to the alleged victim and his/her family.

**Treat the Accused with Dignity and Support**

- Since the accused has not been formally charged or convicted, he/she should be treated as innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. Be supportive but objective.

**Bring Closure to the Investigation**

- If the accused is eventually convicted, then she/he will be terminated from church employment or voluntary activities with children. Counseling may also be appropriate. If charges are unsubstantiated, the decision about whether to restore the accused to full employment or volunteer service may depend on a number of circumstantial factors. Consult the Bishop and legal counsel for guidance. Of course, all personnel actions should be well documented in writing and kept in confidential files. Attorney-client privileged material should never be disclosed without first consulting your attorney.

**Implement Appropriate Action****Responding to the Child Victim**

- One of several ways in which the clergy, staff member, or volunteer may come to suspect child abuse or neglect is from information that a child himself or herself shares.<sup>1</sup> If a child

discloses abuse or neglect, the clergy, staff member, or volunteer receiving such a communication should attempt to:

- Ensure the child's immediate security and safety.
- Respect the child's privacy by finding an appropriate non-threatening place to talk, while still in public view.
- If reasonably possible, ask a staff member, trained volunteer, or other responsible adult to join in listening to the child's/youth's account.
- Remain calm, listen, and avoid expressing shock or outrage.
- Let the child know that he/she is believed.
- Assure the child that any abuse was not his/her fault.
- If helpful, tell the child that he/she was brave to disclose the abuse. It is reasonable to thank the child for trusting you with this information.
- Avoid asking questions that could make the child feel responsible or plant ideas that could taint the child's recollection and account. (Child victims are often vague in their initial disclosure.) The primary question to keep asking is, "Is there anything else you'd like to tell me?"
- Write down as accurately as possible what the child discloses.
- Keep the matter confidential. Refrain from discussing the information with or in front of other people who do not need to know what happened. Discussion about the information should be limited to appropriate church and legal authorities, as discussed further below.

If you witness the offense committed by an individual working for the church, ensure that the child is separated from the abuser and in a safe place before following the steps.

### **Reporting to Legal Authorities in Accordance with Applicable Laws**

- No allegations or complaints or reports of suspected abuse should be ignored. Individuals working with children should be aware of, and should comply with, any applicable legal obligations to report suspected child abuse and neglect.
- Further, even where reports are not legally required, voluntary reports of suspected abuse or neglect are legally permitted in all jurisdictions in the Diocese and should always be considered with the assistance of legal counsel. Note: clergy privilege is protected by law; mandatory reporting is required by law in most states. If you sense someone is going to disclose abuse to you, it is helpful to start the conversation with a disclaimer such as, "I'm here to listen to what you'd like to share, but you need to know that it is my job to help keep you safe. If you tell me something that indicates you are not safe or someone else is not, then I am required to get help."
- This information, although current as of the date of publishing, should be updated by the church annually.

### **Reporting to Parents**

- If the person accused of abuse is not the child's parent or guardian or otherwise a member of the household, the Rector or his designee should contact the child's parents or appropriate guardians and offer support from the church.

### **Reporting to Church Authorities**

- Any individual reporting the suspected abuse should report the situation to the appropriate church authorities.

- Report to the Rector (or other appropriate individual). The individual(s) suspecting abuse or neglect should immediately notify the Rector and Senior Warden (or another person designated by the Rector or Senior Warden or otherwise identified in the church's child abuse reporting procedures as authorized to receive such reports) of the suspected child abuse.
- Appropriately Document Actions. The individual reporting the abuse and designated clergy should document any actions taken regarding the complaint and retain that documentation in confidential files. (The church's legal counsel may have specific instructions for how such documentation should be prepared and maintained.)

*NOTE: the investigation of suspected child abuse is the legal responsibility of the police or child protective authorities. It is not the responsibility of church leaders to prove that such an incident did or did not take place;*

### **Taking Appropriate Actions**

- In accordance with the policies and procedures put in place, the Rector or other designated individual should immediately:
  - Suspend Person Accused of Abuse from Duties. If the person accused of abuse is employed by or volunteering with the church, the Rector (or his designee) should immediately remove the person accused of abuse from the situation in which the accusation arose and from any duties where he/she will have any further contact with children. This removal can be done quietly and without fanfare but should be done quickly and without exception. An interim transfer to a position that has no contact with children is one possibility; a leave of absence (with pay if the person is an employee) may be another solution. The church leadership will determine whether the person accused of abuse will continue in ministry.
  - Notify the Bishop. The Rector shall notify the Bishop of ADAN immediately. The Bishop shall notify the diocesan Chancellor. The Bishop may request periodic updates of the investigation being conducted and subsequent actions taken at the local church level and/or may initiate his own investigation into the allegations of child abuse.
  - Notify the Church Legal Counsel. In most circumstances, the Rector should notify the church's legal counsel. Obtaining competent legal advice at the very outset of the matter will help protect the church from failing to comply with legal duties and/or being exposed to additional legal liability. In addition, if the investigation is conducted by legal counsel, the information gathered and conveyed to the attorney may be privileged from disclosure as a confidential attorney/client communication under certain state laws. Subject to advice of the church's legal counsel, the church should cooperate in the investigation conducted by the governmental agency to which the report has been made, as well as any other law enforcement agencies involved with the investigation.
  - Notify Insurance Providers. Unless the church's legal counsel advises otherwise, the church should promptly notify its liability insurance company. This is important for at least four reasons:
    - the insurance policy may require immediate notification for coverage to be effective;
    - the policy may pay for counseling or legal advice;

- the policy may not provide coverage for lawsuits involving acts of sexual abuse; and
- the insurance carrier, having dealt with similar cases, may be a source of helpful advice.

If the church determines that a report is legally required or decides that it should make report even if not legally, the contact information in the box may be helpful in reaching appropriate legal authorities.

### **Releasing Information**

- Maintain appropriate confidentiality of any allegations and of the investigation as much as possible. Emphasize the importance of maintaining the confidentiality of the investigation to each person who is interviewed and instruct them not to disclose any information regarding the allegations or your investigation to anyone other than law enforcement or child protective authorities. Maintaining appropriate confidentiality will: (a) protect the privacy and reputations of those actually or allegedly involved in the incident; (b) reduce the risk that defamation may occur; and (c) help preserve the attorney-client privilege, where otherwise applicable.

### **Reporting Internally**

- In addition to the reporting obligations discussed above, clergy, staff members, and volunteers shall also promptly internally report to the appropriate ministry leader or clergy, an immediate supervisor, and/or to the Rector (or his/her designee) whenever the clergy, staff member, or volunteer:
  - Is involved in or becomes aware of any sexually-oriented communications involving a child; or
  - Is involved in or becomes aware of any inappropriate behavior involving a child by a clergy person, a staff member, or a volunteer; or
  - Is arrested for, or convicted of, any crime involving child abuse and/or neglect, is charged with child sexual abuse in a civil proceeding; commits an act of child sexual abuse; or (except as otherwise prohibited or limited by applicable laws and regulations) is diagnosed with any paraphilic psychological condition, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, including, but not limited to, pedophilia, voyeurism or exhibitionism; or
  - Becomes aware that a member of his/her household has been arrested for, or convicted of, any crime involving child abuse and/or neglect; been charged with child sexual abuse in a civil proceeding; committed an act of child sexual abuse; or (except as otherwise prohibited or limited by applicable laws and regulations) been diagnosed with any paraphilic psychological condition, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, including, but not limited to, pedophilia, voyeurism or exhibitionism; or
  - Becomes aware that a person who is attending the church has been arrested for, or convicted of, any crime involving child abuse and/or neglect; has been charged with child sexual abuse in a civil proceeding; has committed an act of child sexual abuse; or (except as otherwise prohibited or limited by applicable laws and regulations) has been diagnosed with any paraphilic psychological condition, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, including, but not limited to, pedophilia, voyeurism or exhibitionism.

## **Important Definitions and Considerations**

### **Federal Definition of Sexual Exploitation of Children**

Sexual exploitation of children is defined in the United State Code as:

18 U.S.C. 2251 – SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN

It is forbidden for any person to employ, use, persuade, induce, entice, or coerce any minor to engage or assist any other person to engage in, or to transport any minor in interstate or foreign commerce with the intent that the minor engage in, any sexually explicit conduct if such person knows or has reason to know that such visual depiction was produced using materials that have been mailed, shipped, or transported in interstate or foreign commerce by any means, including by computer, or if such visual depiction has actually been transported in interstate or foreign commerce or mailed.

It is forbidden for any parent, legal guardian, or person having custody or control of a minor to knowingly permit such minor to engage or assist any other person to engage in sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing any visual depiction of such conduct if the parent, legal guardian, or person knows or has reason to know that such visual depiction will be transported in interstate or foreign commerce or mailed, if that visual depiction was produced using materials that have been mailed, shipped, or transported in interstate or foreign commerce by any means, including by computer, or if such visual depiction has actually been transported in interstate or foreign commerce or mailed.

### **State Reporting Laws and Forms of Child Abuse**

#### **General Considerations**

- Child abuse, in practical terms, refers to an act committed by a parent, caregiver or person in a position of trust (even though he/she may not care for the child on a daily basis) which is not accidental and which harms or threatens to harm a child's physical or mental health or welfare.
- Each state and the District of Columbia has its own definition of what constitutes "child abuse" under civil and criminal laws, and each parish, mission, and church plant in ADAN should be familiar with the relevant laws and legal definitions in its jurisdiction. Each parish should be familiar with the laws in its own state, as well as those of any state to which it may take children on trips or for other church-related events.
- In general, the definitions of "child abuse" and "child neglect" in all states in our Diocese include the following elements (among others):
  - Physical abuse is non-accidental injury, which is intentionally inflicted upon a child or youth.
  - Sexual abuse perpetrated by an adult is any contact or activity of a sexual nature that occurs between a child or youth and an adult. This includes any activity, which is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of the adult,
  - Sexual abuse perpetrated by another child or youth is any contact or activity of a sexual nature that occurs between a child or youth and another child or youth when there is no consent, when consent is not possible, or when one child or youth has power over the other child or youth. This includes any activity which is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of any of the children or youth.



- Emotional abuse is mental or emotional injury to a child or youth that results in an observable and material impairment in the child or youth's growth, development or psychological functioning.
- Neglect is the failure to provide for a child or youth's basic needs or the failure to protect a child or youth from harm.
- Economic exploitation is the deliberate misplacement, exploitation, or wrongful temporary or permanent use of a child or youth's belongings or money.

In addition, substantial information about child abuse and neglect prevention, response, and reporting can be found at the Child Welfare Information Gateway, which is online at:

<http://www.childwelfare.gov>

To access information about a particular state, visit this page on the site:

[www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws\\_policies/state](http://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/state)

*NOTE: Although the information on the [www.childwelfare.gov](http://www.childwelfare.gov) site is updated periodically, it is not always completely up-to-date. It is always important to check (or to have legal counsel check) the most recent laws and regulations in your state.*

### **How to Report Abuse to Child Protective Services**

- For states, or when the reporting party resides in a different state than the child, please call Childhelp, 1-800-4-A-Child (1-800-422-4453), or your local child protective agency.
- Although the name of the person reporting the suspected abuse may be requested for follow-up purposes, the person reporting abuse to Child Protective Services is generally NOT required to give his/her name. If the person reporting does provide his name and requests anonymity, there are legal mechanisms in place in each state to protect the reporter from having his/her name given to the alleged abuser, unless otherwise ordered by a court.

### **Information to Provide to Child Protective Services When Reporting Suspected Child Abuse** **It is helpful for the person reporting suspected abuse to provide the following:**

- The name and address of the child and the parent or person responsible for his/her care.
- The names of other persons, especially children, living in the suspected victim's home.
- Address of the child's home.
- The child's age, sex, and race.
- The name of the school the child attends.
- The name and address of the alleged abuser, if known.
- A description of the alleged abuse and or neglect, including how long it may have been happening.
- The relationship between the person reporting the abuse and the child.

*Once a Child Abuse Form is completed, that form should be kept in a confidential file with the church.*

## **The Church's Understanding of, and Response to, an Incident of Abuse**

- It is essential that each church respond to a report or instance of abuse or misconduct in a manner that promotes healing for the survivor the offender, and the loved ones of both parties, as well as healing within the congregation generally.

### **Responding to the Victim**

- The first and foremost rule when responding to a victim of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse is to ensure the immediate safety of the person who has been harmed. He or she should be protected from the abuser, non-offending care givers should be contacted and informed of the situation, medical personnel should be contacted if the victim is in need of immediate medical care, and the authorities should be contacted by witnesses to the abuse in accordance with applicable state laws.
- When a child or youth discloses that he or she has been physically, emotionally, or sexually abused, or when a congregant, staff member, or volunteer witnesses such abuse, it can be a lot for a volunteer or staff person to handle. A supportive reaction can make all the difference to the survivor of the abuse, but that doesn't mean that such a reaction comes easily. Encouraging words and phrases can avoid judgment and show support for the survivor.

### **Caring for the Congregation**

- Incidents of child abuse, and the secrecy that often surrounds them, can cause devastating harm to the church as well as to the victims. Therefore, where current or past child abuse has been perpetrated by clergy, staff, or volunteers of the church, the church shall provide consultation to encourage the discussion of such incidents and to provide a means to facilitate healing within the church.
- It is essential that each church respond to a report or instance of abuse or misconduct in a manner that promotes healing for the victim, the offender, and the loved ones of both parties, as well as healing within the congregation generally.
- Traumatic events have well-documented effects, both immediate and delayed. When a congregation experiences a trauma, the impact is likely to be expressed through symptoms such as:
  - Loss of energy or feeling of paralysis
  - Distrust of leadership (often projected onto future leadership)
  - Divisions within the congregation
  - Some group members feeling isolated and withdrawing from the group
  - Anger being displaced onto unrelated issues, or blown out of proportion
  - A conspiracy of silence about the traumatic event
  - Despair about the congregation's future
  - Distorting responsibility for the event
  - Seeking a "quick fix" without thoughtful reflection
  - Difficulty making normal and necessary decisions.
- All of these symptoms could be carried into subsequent years unless the trauma is processed, integrated into the life of the congregation, and healed. A useful model for addressing and integrating a trauma is the "debriefing" model drawn from disciplines that do crisis counseling, such as emergency medicine, law enforcement, military science, crisis chaplaincy, and disaster agencies.

- A trauma debriefing allows participants to integrate the reality of the event with their own responses to that event. The Church Information, Trauma, and Healing Debriefing Model set forth below is an effective means to communicate, process, and accept facts, allow feelings to surface, and then, through God's healing grace, head into the future unhindered by the past.

### **Guiding Principles for Healing in the Church**

- The following guidelines outline steps that can be taken to promote healing in the congregation:
  - Contact with the family
    - Before the process for healing begins, the Bishop or his representative should maintain regular contact with the Complainant(s) and describe to Complainant(s) the procedures to be used for promoting congregational healing.
  - Privacy Concerns
    - The privacy of the Complainant(s) must be balanced against the need for openness with the local church. Insofar as possible, the identity of the Complainant(s) and any details which may identify him/her should be kept confidential.
  - Providing Facts
    - The procedures shall take into account that church members usually know when "something is going on," and, in the absence of facts, rumor and speculation will grow.
  - Notifying Lay Leadership
    - The lay leadership should be advised promptly of the issues, since that group's participation is vital in planning and implementing the processes for church healing.
  - Trauma Debriefing
    - The healing and unity of a congregation are fostered when there is an open meeting, called a Church Information, Trauma, and Healing Debriefing ("Debriefing"), at which the Bishop or his representative presents as much factual information as possible. Because the local church likely will include people who have experienced abuse or misconduct themselves, appropriate personnel trained in crisis ministry should be present and available on a small group or one-to-one basis immediately after the formal presentation. Also, local mental health resources (including sliding scale fee agencies) should be publicized so that members of the congregation know how to find these services. (Note that many communities have publicly funded survivor services, which offer a variety of specialized resources.) The debriefing generally should follow the process set forth herein. The message should be, "The Church is a place for truth. We follow Jesus, who described himself as the Way, the Truth, and the Life."
  - Church Spokesperson
    - The vestry, in consultation with the clergy, is encouraged to appoint a church spokesperson. The congregation, including church members and staff members, is urged to refer all media inquiries to the church spokesperson.

- Interim Priest
  - If the circumstances require that an interim priest be engaged, that priest should have special training in trauma debriefing. The interim priest should have regular opportunities to report and consult with the Bishop, his designated staff person, and counselors.
- Consulting Legal Authorities
  - Neither the clergy nor any other church worker should attempt to impede persons who wish to consult with legal authorities.
- Continuing Pastoral Care
  - The clergy and/or vestry should consult with the Bishop about additional resources for the healing and care of the congregation. Pastoral care includes, when appropriate, professional counseling, healthcare, and therapy.

## **Appendix A**

### **(Ready-to-Use Forms that Should be Made Available and Stored Electronically)**

- **Personal Screening Statement**
- **Acknowledgment of Diocesan Policy for the Protection of Children**
- **Internal Reporting Form**
- **Supervisory Plan**

### **Personal Screening Statement**

The term “child abuse” is defined in the Anglican Diocese of All Nations Policy for Protection of Children as an act committed by a parent, caregiver, person in a position of trust interacting with a minor, or by any other individual that is both intentional and which harms or threatens to harm a child’s physical or mental health or welfare, and may include any or all of the following:

- physical and/or mental abuse;
- physical and/or mental neglect; or
- sexual abuse and/or exploitation.

Answer the questions below based on the definition above. Circle Y or N.

Have you ever:

- been arrested for or convicted of any crime involving child abuse or sexual misconduct, or been found to have abused or neglected a child by a family or other court? Y N
- had such a conviction or other disposition for any such offense expunged? Y N
- been charged with child abuse or neglect in a civil or family court proceeding? Y N
- committed an act of child abuse or child neglect? Y N
- been diagnosed with any paraphilic psychological condition, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, including, but not limited to, pedophilia, voyeurism, or exhibitionism? Y N
- been registered as a sex offender in any state, province, or territory? Y N

Has any member of your household ever:

- been arrested for, or convicted of, any crime involving child abuse or sexual misconduct? Y N
- had such an arrest or conviction expunged? Y N
- been charged with child abuse in a civil proceeding? Y N
- committed an act of child abuse? Y N
- been diagnosed with any paraphilic psychological condition (as defined by the American Psychiatric Association) including, but not limited to, pedophilia, voyeurism, or exhibitionism? Y N
- been registered as a sex offender in any state, province, or territory? Y N

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Signature

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Date

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Printed Name

### **Acknowledgement of Policy for the Protection of Children**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (print name), have received a copy of the Policy for the Protection of Children, I have read it in full, and understood its content and its applications to my employ or volunteer service in the Diocese and/or local congregation.

I further certify that I will abide by the provisions of these policies as long as I am an employee or volunteer of the congregation.

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Signature

---

Printed Name

---

Date

## Policy for the Protection of Children Internal Reporting Form

Date and time of initial report/outcry: \_\_\_\_\_

Person making initial report/outcry: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact information for person making initial report/outcry: \_\_\_\_\_

Person to whom initial report/outcry was made: \_\_\_\_\_

Position and contact information of person receiving initial report/outcry: \_\_\_\_\_

Substance of initial report/outcry: \_\_\_\_\_

Action(s) taken by person receiving initial outcry/report (with dates and times said actions were taken): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of person receiving initial outcry/report

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date and time Reporting Form was prepared

## Supervisory Plan

Description of activity, including age groups involved \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Details of registration process (attach sample of registration form) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Names of leaders responsible for the activity \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Number of adults required for the activity \_\_\_\_\_

Description of physical environment (e.g., classroom, gym, rotating rooms) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Bathrooms that will be used and description of bathroom for the activity \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

First aid and medication procedures \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Reporting procedure for disciplinary issues \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Procedure for the release of children \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If all or part of the scheduled activity is “off site,” please provide the following:

Details of transportation to and from off-site location(s) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Dining arrangements, including provisions for special diets (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

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Overnight sleeping arrangements (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

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Showering arrangements (if applicable) for adults and minors \_\_\_\_\_

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Name of person(s) who prepared this Supervisory Plan \_\_\_\_\_

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Name of person who submitted this Supervisory Plan (if different from above) \_\_\_\_\_

---

Date Supervisory Plan Submitted \_\_\_\_\_

Final Approval:

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Signature of person approving Supervisory Plan

---

Printed Name

---

Date



Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Felix Orji', with a stylized, cursive script.

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Felix Orji, OSB, DMin, MDiv, DipCS, MEd, BA.Ed, DD, ECCK  
Diocesan Bishop - Anglican Diocese of All Nations  
Anglican Church in North America

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