



**Safeguarding Policy**  
**for the Care and Protection of**  
**Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults**  
**of the**  
**Convocation of Episcopal Churches**  
**in Europe**

Adopted by the Convention of the Convocation on 25 October 2019.



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## I. THEOLOGICAL AND ETHICAL FOUNDATIONS

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld the Word’s glory, glory as of the only Child from God.” — John 1:14 (An Inclusive Language Lectionary) God expressed the fullness of humanity in Jesus of Nazareth, whom we worship as the Word made flesh. To be human is to live with God and the whole of creation in the fullness of freedom and the challenge of responsibility. The pattern of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection resonates unreservedly with God’s call to perfect freedom and responsibility.

In baptism, God, speaking through the Church, claims us in Christ. We become, in Christ, the community of God’s final purpose: justice and peace, love and plenty for the whole creation. This new community lives in Eucharistic fellowship with God and Creation, as a sign and instrument of God’s reconciling purpose in the world.

The Church is called to embody and advance God’s mission. Ministry is the vocation of the whole community: laypersons, deacons, priests, and bishops who together represent Christ and the Church in the world.

The obligation to seek and serve Christ in all persons and to respect the dignity of every human being is binding for all the baptized. The authority with which leaders — ordained persons and adults who minister with minors (children and youth), and vulnerable adults as well as youth in leadership roles — are entrusted, creates an inherent power imbalance in the pastoral relationship. This power imbalance derives from the leadership role and, in the case of clergy, the symbolic authority of an ordained person. Christian leadership is intended to provide occasions for guidance and grace, and its abuse is always and unequivocally wrong.

Ministry involves a necessary tension between a Gospel-based integrity and a Gospel-based intimacy as modeled by the life of Christ. A rigid adherence to a system of rules leads to an unproductive legalism. Yet, without the framework of the law, the intimate relationships into which Christ calls us risk distortion and harm. All the people of God are called to minister attentively within this tension.

This policy intends to provide a pattern for attentive practice of ministry.

## II. EXPECTATIONS AND LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION

This document is a statement for the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe. It is based on the Episcopal Church’s 2018 updated Model Policy for the Protection of Children and Youth and Model Policy for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults. It sets forth expectations for its leaders in their relationships with children, youth, and vulnerable adults. The purpose of this policy is to foster the highest standards of behavior in ministry settings.

Each church and mission is required to have a Safeguarding Policy for Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults. This document is to be adopted by all parishes and missions in the Convocation for this purpose. All policies must be submitted to the Convocation’s Safeguarding Officer, stating the date when they were adopted by the Vestry or Bishop’s

Mission. Any Addendum to this Policy is to be reviewed annually by the parish or mission, with the date and outcome of the review to be submitted to the Convocation Safeguarding Officer.

This mandatory policy seeks to offer direction and requirements for the proper care and appropriate attention to be given to children, youth and vulnerable adults. It also aims to provide for the protection of teachers, youth workers, employees and clergy from compromising or dangerous situations.

It is the responsibility of parishes and mission congregations to comply with all national legal requirements for Safeguarding adding an Addendum for the local context to this Safeguarding Policy. This includes providing any national or local 24/7 Helpline.

This policy does not provide guidelines for Safeguarding issues that may arise in the context of the ‘The Reconciliation of a Penitent’ (Book of Common Prayer p. 446–452). Guidelines as to how a Confessor should respond to a penitent admitting to having committed abuse can be found in a document issued by the Bishop. The guidelines concerning the rite set on page 446 of the Book of Common Prayer establish an appropriate location for Confessor and Penitent and these should be followed.

The church recognizes the reality of the abuse of young people and vulnerable adults which can sometimes occur within the community. The Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe and each of its parishes and missions must therefore play their part together with parents, schools, and other agencies in the prevention of such abuse.

### **III. STATEMENT OF POLICY**

The Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe, through its bishops, clergy and people, is committed to the physical, emotional and spiritual well-being of all the vulnerable persons in its care. It is the policy of the Convocation to safeguard its children, youth and vulnerable adults from physical, sexual and emotional harm while participating in church activities, and to make their safety and comfort a priority. All persons who have responsibility for these people, either clergy or lay, paid or volunteer, are expected to maintain the highest standards in their relationships with them, and to refrain from behavior which might be misunderstood or cause offense. Many young people and vulnerable adults are part of the church community, and likewise many devoted leaders and helpers, paid and volunteer, give of their time and commitment so that those persons may grow in their faith in Jesus Christ. The Convocation is committed to providing a safe and secure environment in which all may safely work and worship.

In particular:

1. Parishes and missions are expected to abide by the policies in this document, and to fulfil insofar as is possible those other procedures suggested as guidelines to provide for the safety and care of young people and vulnerable adults.

2. No abuse of any person by any employee or volunteer or by any member or visitor to a congregation will be tolerated. Allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and will meet with an appropriate response.
3. No person will be allowed to work with vulnerable people if guilty of a previous abusive or sexual offense against such persons, except under the conditions set forth here.
4. Children and youth are not to receive any form of corporal punishment. Discipline problems or issues should be reported to and discussed with parents.
5. The highest level of confidentiality will be maintained in circumstances in which a young person or vulnerable adult confides in a responsible adult, both in regards to them and to the suspected abuser; however, under certain circumstances (such as if the person is suffering or is likely to suffer harm), they should be told that other people will need to know so that they can be protected.
6. Neither the Convocation nor any of its parishes or missions nor their employees or volunteers will attempt to conduct investigations of allegations of abuse on their own, instead referring any case to appropriate local authorities.
7. The Convocation and its parishes and missions will collaborate fully with the statutory and voluntary agencies concerned with abuse.

## IV. DEFINITIONS

Throughout this policy the following definitions will apply:

**Abuse:** this can take a number of forms including physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect.

**Abused Person:** a person who has suffered from or is believed to be at significant risk or threat of physical injury, neglect, emotional or sexual abuse from their parents, other persons responsible for the person's care, or anyone who has access to the person.

**Adult:** anyone who is 18 years of age or over.

**Bullying:** behavior that intimidates, humiliates, offends, degrades or harms another person whether the behavior is verbal, psychological, social or physical.

**Chaperone:** a volunteer adult member of the congregation who assists youth leaders in a specific event or with travel/transportation on an ad-hoc basis without responsibility for oversight of other adults engaged in the same event or travel/transportation.

**Child (minor):** anyone under 18 years of age.

**Cis-Gender:** adjective describing a person whose sense of personal identity and gender corresponds with their gender or sex assigned at birth. This is an evolving term as our understanding and language around gender identity and sexuality expands.

**Emotional Abuse:** mistreatment preventing full emotional development of a child or disrupting the emotional well-being of a person. It can involve conveying to them the idea that they are worthless, unloved or inadequate. It can involve being overprotective or limiting normal social interactions.

**Gender Non-Binary:** an umbrella term for people who identify as neither male nor female. They may identify as both (bigender), neither (agender) a mix between the two (genderfluid) or they can be unsure of their gender (genderfluid). These are evolving terms as our understanding and language around gender identity and sexuality expands.

**Intake Officer:** the person designated by the Convocation to receive information regarding an offence against which a member of the clergy might be held accountable under Title IV of the Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church, which sets out the disciplinary process for clergy. Anyone may contact the Intake Officer to report concerns.

**LGBTQ+:** an acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning and others. It refers to people whose gender identities differ from their gender or sex assigned at birth or whose sexual orientation differs from the heterosexual majority. The “+” is an effort to include additional gender identities. This is an evolving term as our understanding and language around gender identity and sexuality expands.

**Neglect:** persistent failure to meet the basic physical and/or psychological needs of a child or vulnerable adult. It involves failure to provide sufficient food, water, adequate clothing or necessary medical care.

**Off-Site:** any location other than the church premises or, for those congregations without their own building, the premises where the church holds its regular services and events.

**Overnight:** any event that starts on one calendar day and ends on a different calendar day.

**Pastoral Relationship:**

1. Any relationship between a member of the clergy and a person to whom they are providing or have provided counselling, pastoral care, spiritual direction or guidance or from whom the clergy member has received information during the Rite of Reconciliation of a Penitent.
2. Any relationship between a lay minister and any person to whom they are offering prayer ministry and/or any person from whom the lay minister has received sensitive, personal or confidential information in the course of offering ministry.

**Physical Abuse:** inflicting hurt or damage to the body of a person. This includes hitting, shaking, poisoning, burning, suffocation. It may also involve the fabrication of symptoms by an abuser, previously referred to as Munchausen’s syndrome.



**Program:** official activities and meetings sponsored by the Convocation or congregations thereof.

**Public Records Check:** a search of documents and data by a civil servant to determine if a person has any criminal or civil convictions on public record.

**Residential Facility:** an institutional or group home setting where a child or vulnerable adult resides on a permanent or temporary basis such as an orphanage, nursing home, rehabilitation center, assisted living facility or treatment center.

**Responsible Adult:** anyone aged 18 or older, charged with the supervision of children or vulnerable adults in a church-related activity, either on or off the church premises. Such person is designated as ensuring compliance of the activity in accordance with this policy.

**Sacramental Use:** wine used in the Eucharist.

**Sexual Abuse:** acts of sexual assault, sexual exploitation or sexual misconduct towards minors or vulnerable adults. This includes any behavior of a sexual nature that is committed without consent or committed by force, intimidation, coercion or manipulation. It includes contact activities such as intercourse, incest, rape, sodomy, oral sex, touching, kissing, etc. and it also includes non-contact activities such as exhibitionism, grooming or encouraging someone to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Sexual abuse can be committed by a person of any gender and can occur between people of the same or different genders. Children can also sexually abuse other children. The abuse may consist of a single incident or of many incidents over a long period of time. Victims can be any age; most abuse of children and vulnerable adults is committed by someone known to them and trusted by them, either within the family, among their friends, or in the local community.

**Title IV:** a section of the Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church which details clergy professional standards, accountability and ecclesiastical discipline.

**Training:** organized activity designed to provide information and/or instructions to strengthen and enhance the recipient's understanding, capacity, and exercise of ministry.

- **Universal Training:** a standard of training that will foster a culture of safety and inclusion for all people that includes a broad overview of issues of vulnerability, power, and healthy boundaries. This training is designed to equip all people to live out their Baptismal Covenant.
- **Specialized Training:** a standard of additional training that equips people who participate in or have oversight responsibility for ministries. In addition to Universal Training, a

person will have access to training that is specialized and tailored to their role and ministry function.

**Transgender:** an adjective describing a person whose sense of personal identity and gender does not correspond with the gender or sex assigned to them at birth. This is an evolving term as our understanding and language around gender identity and sexuality expands.

**Vulnerable Adult:** any adult who is infirm or diminished in capacity due to age, illness or disability. Also, any adult who is wholly or partially dependent upon one or more other persons for emotional, psychological or physical care or support: such care may be temporary, for example after an accident or during illness. Also, any adult who, because of a crisis suffers from vulnerability and becomes dependent on another, for example following the death of a family member or after a job loss.

**Youth:** anyone who is at least 12 years old but is under 18 years old. A person over 18 but still in full time education might also be referred to as a youth.

**Youth Commission:** a board of the Convocation responsible for coordinating joint activities with youth throughout the Convocation and assisting youth leaders in their work in the congregations. Members of the board are appointed by the Bishop.

## V. THE CARE OF CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

### A. Requirements

#### 1. Inclusivity

No one shall be denied rights or access to an equal place in the life, worship or leadership of any program or activity because of race, color, ethnic origin, nationality, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, ability, age or socio-economic class.

#### 2. Environment

Congregations should ensure that no activity involving children or vulnerable adults takes place in an unsafe environment or with inappropriate supervision. Lacking these minimal requirements, activities should be cancelled rather than allowed to proceed in an unsafe manner. Specifically:

##### **Staffing for children**

The minimum number of responsible adults at any activity involving children is two who should not be related. No children's activity should take place with only one responsible adult present, and a gender balance is to be preferred. If the responsible adults are related, parents must be informed of this as soon as possible and their agreement to the participation of their child obtained. Note that for purposes of fulfilling these requirements, teenagers under the age of 18 do not count as responsible adults but are themselves children. Exception to this

rule may be made in the case of children 17 years old who have received training in child care such as that provided by the Scouting or Guiding organizations, provided that they are supervised by an adult present with them.

Insofar as is possible, the following staffing levels are recommended:

- 0–2 years: 1 person for every 3 children (1:3)
- 2–3 years: 1 person for every 4 children (1:4)
- 3–8 years: 1 person for every 8 children (1:8)
- 8–18 years: 1 person for the first 8 children (1:8)  
and 1 more adult for every 12 more children (1:12)

In the rare case that only a single adult is available, the parents of children partaking in the activity must be informed immediately and their agreement to the participation of their child obtained, and a second adult must be able to maintain visual contact with the adult leading the activity. This can be achieved by frequent, random checks of the room in which the activity is being held.

### **3. Data Protection**

The requirements of the current data protection laws valid in Europe must be observed. No photographs can be posted online without explicit permission from the subject or from their parent if a child.

### **4. Visits to Vulnerable Adults in their Private Residence**

If possible, at least two members of the clergy or lay leadership shall visit people in their private residence, or the visitor should ask for another member of the household to be present in the building during the visit. When this is not feasible, documentation of the visit should be maintained, including the time and duration of the visit and general notes on the matters discussed.

### **5. Visits to Vulnerable Adults in Residential Facilities**

Clergy and lay people visiting vulnerable adults in residential facilities should ensure that the facility staff are aware of their visit and when they leave the facility after the visit. The door to a resident's private room should remain open during a visit when possible. They must also be aware that LGBTQ+ residents may not have informed the facility staff of their sexual identity and wish this to be kept confidential.

## **B. Administration**

### **1. Activities with Children**

Parents or guardians should be asked for a contact number and any specific medical information for each child participating in any church sponsored activity (see Page 29).

Parents or guardians of regular attendees should be required to provide this information (particularly if their parents or guardians are not on-site during the activity), as should visitors or friends if they attend more than two or three times a year.

Parents or guardians should always sign a consent form before children are taken off-site for activities (see Page 29). Children whose parents or guardians have not given such permission should not participate in the event. Older children who attend youth events should also be asked to read and sign a Community Covenant, acknowledging their willingness to abide by its provisions (See Page 31). Adequate insurance should cover any activities, on or off-site.

## **2. Meetings with Vulnerable Adults**

Those ministering to vulnerable adults should document all meetings and visits, recording time, place and any concerns arising from the meeting. Such documentation is confidential.

## **3. Basic Needs**

No one is to be deprived of food, water, sleep or any other basic human need at any events unless this is part of a program such as intentional fasting or learning about homelessness. Prior to such programs, children and parents or guardians must give written approval and participants who feel unable to complete the program must have their basic needs met as soon as possible.

## **4. Off-Site and Overnight Programs**

Prior approval of the clergy and the vestry or bishop's committee is required for child members of the congregation to attend overnight programs as a church group, unless these are Convocation events already approved by the Convocation bodies.

Parental/guardian approval is required for all events taking place away from the church premises and this should be in the form of a registration form including information on important medical and other sensitive issues. The contents of all such forms is confidential, unless participants, or their parents, agree to certain information being made available to others in the group.

One adult, at least 25 years of age, should serve as the travel administrator and be responsible for all aspects of the trip, including carrying all documentation, contact information, forms, etc.

Many Convocation events will require international travel; parents and organizers must ensure that participants have any necessary visas and permissions to leave the country of departure and enter the destination country.

Organizers must ensure that valid travel insurance has been obtained. This is the responsibility of the parish or mission congregations, although they can pass on the costs to the participants or their parents/ guardians/caretakers.

Participants in overnight programs will be provided with individual beds or sleeping bags and there shall be at least three children or youth sleeping in any room. If participants are not all in the same room, then adult supervisors should have rooms on the same floor and randomly scattered among the rooms with the children or youth. One adult shall have the room closest to the stairs, lift and/or exit.

If participants are driven to events by adult participants the drivers shall be at least 21 years of age and show proof of a current, valid driving license. Driver record checks should be provided if the driver is transporting children on a regular basis.

If participants travel to events on public transport, then children and youth will require more supervisors than for on-site programs. This is in case an adult has to stay behind with a participant in the event of an emergency. As far as possible staffing levels are:

- 9–14 years: 1 person for every 5 children (1:5)
- 15–18 years: 1 person for every 7 children (1:7)

However, there must not be less than two adult chaperones irrespective of the group size, and a minimum of three adult chaperones is strongly recommended. The Youth Commission recognizes that for small parishes or missions, finding three chaperones to take children or youth to an event could be a block to ministry. While we endeavor to promote safe practices within the Convocation, we do not wish to create barriers to the participation of some of our more isolated young people in terms of access to youth ministry opportunities.

## **5. Medical Assistance during off-site or overnight programs**

All participants in such programs must provide the leaders with up-to-date information on their medical insurance coverage.

All medications, both prescription and over the counter, belonging to minors should be given to the responsible adult leading the group and the required frequency, dosage and circumstances related to their usage should be provided in writing. Medication can be kept by youth on prior written agreement of the parent or legal guardian: such exceptions may include inhalers, epi-pens and birth control pills. Only the responsible adult should supervise the taking of the medication they have been entrusted with, except in cases of emergency where this proves impossible.

A first aid kit must be taken by a leader to any off-site event.

A record must be kept of all medications or first aid given to any participant in a program. This shall include the participant's name, the date and time of the treatment, the name of the person giving the medication or first aid and a brief description of the medication and dosage or the first aid given and the reason therefore.

## **6. Confidentiality**

Although confidentiality is normally a prerequisite for meetings with children and vulnerable adults, they must be made aware in advance that this cannot be guaranteed if they disclose a situation of abuse, neglect or exploitation which will need to be reported to the respective authorities.

## **C. Additional Suggested Guidelines**

While some latitude may be necessary in the application of the following suggested guidelines to specific circumstances (such as congregations which do not own their place of meeting), nevertheless the guiding principle must be that an event or activity should not happen if it cannot be held safely without danger to the participants.

### **1. Premises**

Meeting places should be clean, warm, well lit, well ventilated, and those for children should be furnished with child-safe fixtures, and suitably spacious (2.3 square meters per child is an accepted standard for small children). Toilets should be readily available, with appropriate privacy and sanitation. Play areas, either indoor or outdoor, should be safe and well supervised. Fire extinguishers should be well placed and escape routes should be well known. A fire drill should be held at least once each year for children's groups which meet regularly, such as Sunday School or youth group.

### **2. Health and safety**

Food preparation and/or storage should be done in a sanitary, healthful manner, and drinks should always be available. There should always be access to a telephone. No smoking or illegal drugs should be permitted either for children or adults. No fireworks, firearms, or other weapons should be permitted.

In child-only activities no alcoholic drinks should be available for the children or the responsible adults. In the case of events where there are a number of children and adults participating and where alcoholic beverages might be served, the normal discretion of designating safe drivers and supervision should be observed.

Children should not be allowed to leave the premises unsupervised except with their parent's express permission. Children's safe arrival and return to church activities should be assured.

A first aid kit should be accessible.

### **3. Good practice for personal conduct by responsible adults:**

- Treat everyone with the respect and dignity befitting their age and mental ability.
- Watch your speech, tone of voice, and body language.
- Learn to control and discipline children without physical punishment.
- Don't play rough or sexually provocative games.

- Don't be sexually suggestive about or to a child or vulnerable adult even in fun, or encourage such attention-seeking behavior as "crushes".
- Don't touch anyone inappropriately or intrusively.
- Make sure another adult is around if you need to help take a child or vulnerable adult to the toilet, to help them in washing or if you need to give First Aid.
- Don't invade the privacy of a child while washing, toileting, dressing or sleeping.
  - Transgender, genderqueer or gender non-binary children or adults who express the need or desire for increased privacy should be provided with reasonable arrangements such as the use of a private area or a different time schedule for washing and changing. They should not be required to use a bathroom or restroom that conflicts with their gender identity. Alternative arrangements should allow them to keep their transgender status confidential if they so wish.
- Adults should always shower in different facilities to children or, if this is not possible, at different times.
- Don't scapegoat, ridicule or reject anyone.
- Don't show favoritism to a child.
- Don't allow children or vulnerable adults to involve you in excessive attention seeking that is overtly physical or sexual in nature.
- Don't give car rides to children on their own. If this is unavoidable, the child should sit in the back seat. Always make sure that each person is securely buckled in with a seat belt.
- Don't permit abusive activities such as intimidation, ridiculing, or bullying.
- Don't allow unknown adults access to children.
- Don't assume that inappropriate behavior can't happen in your group.

#### **4. Meetings**

- Make sure that all congregants know they can talk to the safeguarding officer if they need to do so.
- Make sure another adult is present nearby if you need to talk with a child privately, and make sure the child knows this. If possible, such meetings should take place where others can see the participants but not hear their conversation. If meetings are not on the church's premises, they should take place in a public space such as a coffee shop, where other adults will be present, and parents or guardians should be informed in advance. Never invite a child to your home alone; always invite a group of children and ensure there is another adult on the premises.
- Always maintain an "open-door" policy, welcoming visits by parents or guardians.

## 5. Responding to inappropriate advances

Children or vulnerable adults may sometimes make suggestive approaches to those who are ministering to or caring for them. They may have a crush, or they may act inappropriately following previous abusive experiences. Sometimes inappropriate physical contact can happen accidentally.

In any such circumstances, the responsible adult should:

- Make an appropriate apology if the contact is accidental.
- Tell the person if their language or behavior is unacceptable, explaining why.
- Tell the leader or clergy person of the group about the incident.
- Record the incident in a confidential manner.

Decide in consultation with another leader or clergy person what measures should be taken to help the child or vulnerable adult and prevent a recurrence.

## VI. POLICY AND GUIDELINES FOR SOCIAL MEDIA

As an ever-increasing number of people use and prefer digital communication over other forms, it is essential that the church be present in this mission field. Social networking sites, on-the-spot communication devices and email can enhance communication, faith sharing and deepen relationship. The following recommended practices and guidelines apply commonly accepted principles of healthy boundaries and safe church to the virtual world of digital networking and communication.

### A. General Information about Digital Communications

- All communication sent digitally (email, social networking sites, notes or posts, etc.) is NOT CONFIDENTIAL and may be shared or reposted to others.
- Interactions in the virtual world need to be transparent, just as a window in the door provides transparency in the physical world.
- In the virtual world, healthy boundaries and safe church practices must be adhered to as they are in the physical world.
- In the virtual world, “friend” can mean anyone with whom you are willing to communicate through that medium. In the physical world, friend can mean much more in terms of intimacy, self-disclosure, mutuality and expectations for relationship.
- Laws regarding mandated reporting of suspected abuse, neglect and/or exploitation of children, youth and vulnerable adults apply in the virtual world as they do in the physical world.



## **B. Policy, Practices and Guidelines for Interactions with Children and Youth**

### **1. Social Networking Sites-Relationships**

- Adults who minister to children and youth are strongly encouraged to set very stringent privacy settings on any social networking profile. Individual personal profiles are to be used to interact with real friends, family and peers. Adults should not submit “friend” requests to minors or youth. Youth may not be able to decline such requests due to the disparity of power between youth and adults. Youth may ask adults to be “friends”, and adults should discern the level of contact they want to maintain with youth prior to responding to these requests.
- If an adult chooses to accept friend requests from minors or youth who are associated with their community of faith, other adult leaders must have full access to all aspects of that adult’s profile and correspondence.
- Adults who want to connect via a social networking website with youth to whom they minister are strongly encouraged to set up a closed group account that youth may join. Youth requesting to “friend” an adult can then be invited to join this group rather than be accepted as a friend on an adult’s personal profile account. The purpose of these two separate accounts/profiles is to create a line of privacy and maintain healthy boundaries with youth and real family, friends and colleagues.
- Any material on any site (whether affiliated with the church or not) that raises suspicion that a child has been or will be abused, neglected and/or exploited should be immediately reported to the clergy and/or to the parish or mission Safeguarding Officer. If the material is on a church affiliated site, that material should be documented for church records and then removed from the site.

### **2. Groups on Social Networking Sites**

- Closed groups, but not “hidden” groups, should be used for youth groups.
- Groups should have at least two unrelated adult administrators as well as at least two youth administrators.
- Invitations to youth to join the group should be made by youth administrators, unless a youth previously asked an adult administrator to invite him/her to join the group.
- Behavioral covenants should be created to govern what content is appropriate and inappropriate for an online youth group.
- Any material on any site (whether affiliated with the church or not) that raises suspicion that a child has been or will be abused, neglected and/or exploited should be immediately reported to the clergy and/or parish or mission Safeguarding Officer. If the material is on a church affiliated site, that material should be documented for church records and then removed from the site.
- Inappropriate material that does not raise suspicion that a child has been or will be abused, neglected and/or exploited should immediately be removed from the site.

- Any content that details inappropriate behavior (outside of the bounds of the established behavioral covenant) during a church-sponsored event or activity should be addressed by adult youth leaders and parents.
- Social networking groups for youth should be open to parents of current members.
- Parents should be informed that the content of youth pages or groups that are not sponsored by the church are not within the purview of adult youth leaders.
- Adult leaders of youth groups and former youth members who, due to departure or removal from position, or who are no longer eligible because they “aged-out” of a program should be immediately removed from digital communication with youth groups via social networking sites, list serves, etc.

### **C. Policy, Practices and Guidelines for Interactions with Adults**

- Clergy are strongly encouraged to set very stringent privacy settings on any social networking profile to shield both adult and youth members from viewing content that may be inappropriate.
- Individual personal profiles of clergy are to be used to interact with real friends, family and peers. Clergy should not submit “friend” requests to parishioners and others to whom they minister. The disparity of power may not give the other person the ability to decline such request.
- Clergy who want to connect via a social networking website with parishioners are strongly encouraged to set up a group account that all parishioners may join. The purpose of having a personal profile and parish group is to create a line of privacy and maintain healthy boundaries with parishioners and real family, friends and colleagues.
- Clergy should consider the impact of declining a “friend” request from parishioners. These encounters may create a tension in “real world” relationships. Clergy can direct “friend” requests from parishioners to the parish’s group page.
- Clergy who work directly with youth are encouraged to establish church sponsored digital communications groups to maintain contact with youth members.
- When a cleric’s ministry at a parish or other ministry setting ends, the cleric should remove parishioners as “friends” or contacts in all forms of digital communications.

### **D. Recommendations for Video Chats, Blogs or Video Blogs**

- Adults should refrain from initiating video chats with youth.
- Participants in a video chat or blog should consider what will be shown in the video such as their surroundings, their clothing, their state of dress, etc.
- All transcripts of on-line text chats, video chats, blogs or video blogs should be saved when possible.

- All clergy and adults engaged in ministry with youth should consider the content and nature of any post that will be read by or visible to youth. Your voice is often considered the voice of the church.

### **E. Recommendations for Publishing/Posting Content Online**

- Congregations must inform participants when they are being videoed because church buildings are not considered public space.
- Any faith community that distributes videos of its worship services or activities on the web or via other broadcast media **MUST** post signs that indicate the service will be broadcast.
- All communities of faith should take care to secure signed Media Release forms from adults and guardians of minors who will or may participate in activities that may be photographed or videoed for distribution.
- Photos that are published on church sponsored sites should not include names or contact information for children or youth.

### **F. Recommendations for Use of Email or Texting (Includes Twitter)**

- Email can be an appropriate and effective means of communicating basic factual information such as the time of an event, agenda for a meeting, text of a document, etc.
- Email is not an appropriate communication method for matters that are pastorally or legally sensitive, emotionally charged or require extensive conversation.
- If an email message is longer than a couple of sentences, then the matter might more properly be addressed via live conversation.
- Humor and sarcasm can be easily misinterpreted in an email.
- All email users should take a moment to consider the ramifications of their message before clicking on the “send” or “reply to all” button.

## **VII. RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF RESPONSIBLE ADULTS**

### **A. Administration**

1. The Convocation will elect a Convocation Safeguarding Officer who will serve for a period of three years. The Convocation Safeguarding Officer will coordinate with the Bishop and with the clergy and Safeguarding Officers in the congregations to ensure the safeguarding of all members of the Convocation. The Bishop of the Convocation will also appoint an Intake Officer who will receive complaints or concerns concerning clergy behavior.

2. The vestry or bishop's committee is the responsible body in the local congregation and has a duty of care towards its vulnerable people. Each vestry or bishop's committee shall appoint

at least one Safeguarding Officer for the congregation. The Safeguarding Officer will be a member of the parish or mission. The Safeguarding Officer will take responsibility for monitoring the work with children or vulnerable adults in the congregation and will also take responsibility for the implementation of the policy.

In the case of mission congregations which may not have organized bishop's committees, it is the responsibility of the sponsoring parish to oversee their work with vulnerable people.

3. Children are at risk of abusive or inappropriate care in the church, both because responsible adults may be inexperienced or have unpredictable behavior, and because of the easy access to children in a voluntary community.

Factors contributing to the risk of abuse include:

- Institutional denial
- Failure to respond and/or prosecute
- Fewer built-in barriers than other youth-serving organizations
- Lack of coordinated child protection strategies.

For these reasons, it is imperative that congregations exercise care in the recruitment and training of adults who will be responsible for children.

## **B. Mandatory Provisions**

### **1. Background checks**

All church employees and persons working with children or vulnerable adults should be asked to fill out Section A ("Personal Information and Background") of the personal background and references sheet (see Page 26). In addition, all clergy and employees, as well as volunteers who regularly supervise youth activities should complete Section B ("References") so that background checks can be made. This check will include at the minimum a contact with references and may also include an investigation of an individual's criminal record. All church employees and persons working with children will also be required to sign a statement indicating that he or she has received and read this document and has never been convicted of child abuse nor had such a conviction expunged (see Page 28). These statements should be kept on file in the church office.

All persons working with children must comply with any national laws in this regard. Vestries and bishop's committees must attain police checks for anyone before working with minors. Documents should be filed confidentially and kept by the parish or mission.

### **2. Training**

All clergy who are resident in or licensed by the Convocation shall complete a course in the prevention of child abuse or shall produce a certificate to show that they have completed such a course elsewhere. This certificate shall be kept on file in the Bishop's office. It is the

responsibility of the Convocation to provide such training of the clergy. On-going training on Safeguarding that the Convocation provides is mandatory for all clergy resident in or licensed by the Convocation.

All non-clergy employees, leaders of the church community and volunteers who regularly work with children or vulnerable adults must have read this document on the Policy and Procedures for the Care and Protection of Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults in the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe. They must also complete the Convocation approved safeguarding training. Currently this is the online training prepared by The Episcopal Church – Armatus found at Armatus® Learn to Protect System – Praesidium. All people working directly with children and youth must complete the modules “Meet Sam”, “It Happened to Me”, and “Keeping Your Church Safe”. Clergy, staff members, and vestries/bishop’s committees must complete the module “Safeguarding God’s Peoples: Preventing Sexual Exploitation in Communities of Faith”. Both groups must also complete “Know Your Policies”, thereby confirming that they have read, understood and agree to comply with this policy.

Those who must read this document and complete the relevant sections of the training in addition to those mentioned above include but are not limited to: Safeguarding Officers, Sunday School and Youth Group leaders, leaders of any other group involving minors such as children’s choirs or orchestras, Wardens, Lay Eucharistic Visitors, office staff.

The clergy or Safeguarding Officers can require other persons than those above to take the training when this is considered necessary to their role in the church community and can request some volunteers to undergo additional training, for example to cover more specific topics such as the needs of LGBTQ+ children or aging persons or the ways in which vulnerable people can engage in self-advocacy.

### **3. Information**

All parishes and missions must have a list of the names and contact information for the clergy, or in the absence of a member of the clergy the senior lay leaders of the congregation, the Convocation Safeguarding Officer, the church Safeguarding Officer(s), the Convocation Intake Officer and the relevant local authorities.

This list will be displayed in a readily accessible location whenever there are programs involving children and/or vulnerable adults. A copy of this policy will also be made available in the church premises and all congregants should be made aware of both of these documents and where they can be consulted.

### **C. Additional Suggested Guidelines**

Those who are responsible for staffing Sunday schools, youth groups and similar programs should consider the character of persons chosen as teachers and caregivers, remaining alert for any signs of potentially inappropriate behavior.

Persons new to a congregation should not normally be engaged as volunteers with children or vulnerable people for at least six months after their arrival. It is also desirable that persons working with children receive some basic training in first aid, especially those who travel off-site with children or supervise overnight activities.

## VIII. PROCEDURES FOR RESPONDING TO SUSPECTED ABUSE

### A. Signs of abuse

Church workers and the whole church community should be alert to signs of stress affecting the care and parenting or guardianship of children or vulnerable adults. People with disabilities are especially vulnerable and need special care and protection. Children and young people may themselves also abuse and will need special help and supervision.

Warning signs of abuse include:

- Being withdrawn, hostile, or aggressive
- Not wanting to go to a certain place or be around a particular person, including home
- Showing sexual knowledge or behavior beyond that expected for his or her age
- Engaging in bizarre or fanciful sexual behavior
- Being overly affectionate or seductive with peers or adults
- Poor interactions between a child and their caregiver
- Having recurring medical problems such as infections or pains in the genital, mouth, or anal areas, or venereal disease
- Showing inappropriate or infantile behavior such as withdrawal, depression, poor peer relationships, or avoidance of physical contact
- Constant hunger or storing of food
- Low weight and height for age
- Exhibiting physical signs such as bleeding, bruising, or burn marks, especially if they seem to go untreated and are recurring
- Having unexplained gifts or money.

Warning signs in a parent or caregiver of abusive behavior include:

- Being extremely protective or jealous of a child or vulnerable adult
- Encouraging a child to engage in inappropriate behavior.
- Having a personal history of sexual or physical abuse
- Having a history of substance abuse

- Lacking a network of friends and relationships
- Frequent changes from one congregation to another, or a too eager willingness to "help" with the youth
- Resistance to fulfilling the requirements of rules such as those provided in these guidelines
- Inappropriately suggestive or crude language
- Recurring desire to "make amends" or to make vague apologies about relationships with children.

## **B. Responding to suspected abuse**

### **1. Disclosure by a child**

Workers with children often get to know the children in their charge very well. The children may feel enough trust to tell such workers about unhappy things that are happening – at home, at school, or at church. Such a confidence is a responsibility which the adult must take seriously, remembering that in the case of abuse, the child may want the abuse to stop but to still love the abuser. The child may not realize that the situation is a complicated one, thinking that the adult to whom he or she confides will be able to stop the abuse without anything else happening.

If a child asks to tell something in confidence, always tell the child that it may depend on the circumstances if the child is in danger. Do not agree to "keep secrets". Try to have another adult present while the child speaks, but do not prevent the child from speaking if this is impossible.

Maintain eye contact, allowing the child to talk without pressing for information.

Reassure the child that he or she was the right to tell, and that they are not to blame for what has happened, and that you will give support. Let the child know you will have to tell other people so that the abuse can stop. Try to explain what will happen next in a way that the child can understand. As soon as possible write down as carefully as possible what the child said, how and when they said it, and how they appeared emotionally. Write down what you said in response.

### **2. Suspicions of abuse**

Sometimes persons in the church community may suspect that a child or vulnerable adult is being abused, without having heard a report of the same from them. Anyone may report a concern about a person's well-being, provided the report is made in good faith, either to a responsible adult, a member of the clergy, or to local authorities.

### **3. Action to be taken: whom to contact**

Whenever one has heard a complaint from a child or vulnerable adult, or has sufficient grounds to suspect abuse, it is important to respond promptly. One should not attempt any

investigation but make a report of what has been said or suspected to the appropriate supervisor, either the safeguarding officer or member of the clergy, or to the local authorities. Clergy members are expected to report any incident reported to them. For parish or mission events the local clergy and Safeguarding Officer are the responsible people. For Convocation events, or events involving more than one congregation of the Convocation, the complaint should be reported to the Bishop and/or Convocation Safeguarding Officer. The rule of thumb is always to refer, not to investigate.

All clergy and Safeguarding Officers receiving reports of suspected abuse are responsible for providing appropriate pastoral care to all those affected, and the clergy are responsible for disciplinary action which may lead to the termination of employment or to the unpaid ministry of an abuser.

If the abused person needs urgent medical help call the appropriate emergency services or take them to the nearest emergency medical facility. Discuss the situation with a group leader or member of the clergy. If the suspected abuser is a member of the congregation, a report should be made to the priest in charge and/or the Safeguarding Officer. If the suspected abuser is a member of the clergy, a report should be made to the Bishop and/or the Intake Officer. If after taking counsel with these persons, you are sure you suspect abuse, the concerns should be reported to the appropriate local agency.

Congregations are responsible for having on file information regarding the manner of reporting suspected child abuse according to local law. A report of the situation should be made to the Bishop and/or the Convocation Safeguarding Officer. In reporting, as much detail should be given as possible (dates, times, descriptions, verbatim conversation), distinguishing between fact and opinion, firsthand observation and hearsay.

Members of a congregation involved in reporting suspected abuse should cooperate fully with any investigation by local authorities. The pastoral care of the child or vulnerable adult and suspected abuser should remain a paramount consideration of the congregation.



## IX. APPENDIX

The following resources may be helpful in addressing issues of child protection:

### Training Courses

- The Red Cross First Aid and Safety Certificate.
- The St. John's Ambulance Association First Aid training course.

### Agencies

- Christian Survivors of Sexual Abuse (CSSA)  
BM-CSSA  
London, WC1N 3XX, United Kingdom
- Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service  
PCCA Christian Child Care  
P.O. Box 133  
Swanley, Kent BR8 7UQ, United Kingdom  
Helpline: 44.(0)1322.660011

### Publications

- *Safe from Harm: A Code of Practice*  
Publications Unit, Room 1024  
The Home Office  
50 Queen Anne's Gate  
London, SW1H 9AT, United Kingdom
- Hilary Cashman, *Christianity and Child Sexual Abuse*, SPCK.
- Patrick Parkinson, *Child Sexual Abuse and the Churches*, Hodder and Stoughton.
- *Kidscape* (material on helping children protect themselves)  
World Trade Centre, Europe House  
London E1 9AA, United Kingdom

Resources from the USA will be added to the above.

Questions may also be addressed directly to the Bishop's Office.

## Personal Background and Reference Form

Name of congregation:

The Church takes seriously its responsibilities for the care and nurture of children. We believe that our own congregation should provide children with the highest standard of care and that the experience of growing up in the church community should be safe and enriching.

You have been asked to take part in this nurture. It is a responsible but very fulfilling job, and the congregation will support you in your task. To ensure that our children are looked after as well as possible, the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe (of which we are a part) has drawn up a policy for the health and safety of its children.

You are asked to declare, in accordance with the Convocation Policy, whether you have ever been convicted of a criminal offense, and whether you have had a complaint made against you for inappropriate sexual behavior. If for any reason you are unable to make the declaration please discuss it with your minister.

### A. Personal Information and Background

Required of all employees and persons working with children.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Former name: \_\_\_\_\_

Current address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Citizenship \_\_\_\_\_ Passport number: \_\_\_\_\_

Date and place of issue: \_\_\_\_\_

List the name and address of other churches you have attended in the last five years:

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Please list the name and address of your current and previous employer(s):

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Have you ever been convicted of a crime? YES / NO

Has any formal or informal charge, claim or complaint ever been made that you engaged in?

If the answer is yes to either of these questions, please give full details on a separate sheet.

**B. References**

Required of all employees, and of volunteers—excepting Sunday School teachers and caretakers in nurseries—working with children.

Please give the names of two personal references who are not related to you:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Attest statement

Under penalty of perjury, I swear and affirm that the information given above is true, complete and correct. I understand that a complete background investigation may be conducted with respect to me, and that this information may be verified by contacting persons and organizations with whom I have had contact or which may have information concerning me. I hereby release and agree to hold harmless from liability any person or organization that provides such information. I also agree to release and hold harmless the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe and \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (name of congregation), their officers, employees, and volunteers from any and all liability as it relates to any investigation taken by them regarding the information contained in this form, or any action by them as a result of such investigation.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Witness \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisory Position/Title \_\_\_\_\_

## Child Protection Compliance Statement

Required of employees, and all volunteers working with children.

You are asked to read the Policy for the Care and Protection of Children, which describes good practice with respect to children, and to abide by them. You are also asked to read, complete, and sign the declaration provided below. Please return the completed form to the minister in charge of the congregation who will receive it in confidence and keep it securely:

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (name), hereby acknowledge that  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (name of congregation) has provided me with a copy of the Policy for the Care and Protection of Children of the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe; that I have read the policy; that I understand its contents; and that I agree to abide by the policy.

I further acknowledge that I have not been convicted of a crime involving child abuse and/or neglect, nor have I had such a conviction expunged.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature:

**Registration Form  
Youth Parental Consent & Medical Form  
Community Covenant**

**A. Permission**

I give permission for my son / daughter / ward (circle one),

\_\_\_\_\_ (name)

to attend \_\_\_\_\_ (event)

in the charge of: \_\_\_\_\_ (leaders)

and/or \_\_\_\_\_ (leader/chaperon)

on the day(s) of \_\_\_\_\_ (date),

and to take part in any special activities. In the event of illness, injury or other emergency, I understand that every effort will be made to contact me. If time is of the essence, or if I cannot be reached, I hereby give the person(s) named above permission to act on my behalf to secure medical treatment as necessary, including, but not limited to: medical attentions, anesthesia, surgery and hospitalization, as the attending nurse or physician may prescribe. I understand that it is my responsibility to pay for any medical services which my child may receive while attending this event. I absolve and hold harmless the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe and its designated youth leaders and representatives from any liability in acting on my behalf in this regard.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

## **B. Medical Information:**

Please answer the following questions, and give additional details to any question answered “Yes” below the question. Feel free to add more information on additional pages if necessary.

1. Does the youth suffer from any on-going or recurring illness? Yes / No

If Yes, please explain:

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2. Has the youth had any contagious illness or direct contact with any contagious illness within the last four weeks?

Yes / No

If Yes, Please explain:

3. Does he/she take regular medication?

Yes / No

If yes, please ensure an adequate supply and instructions.

4. Does he/she have any known allergies (including medications), phobias, or disabilities?

Yes / No

Please specify:

5. Has he/she been immunized against Tetanus within the last 10 years?

Yes / No

6. Does he/she have any special dietary requirements?

Yes / No

Please specify:

7. Is there any personal information of which the organizers should be aware?

Yes / No

Please explain:

8. In the event of any “homely” medication (e.g. paracetamol, cough mixture, antacid) being required, please state which you will permit to be given:

### **C. Medical insurance information**

Medical insurance company: \_\_\_\_\_

Policy Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Insurance company's emergency phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of physician: \_\_\_\_\_

Physician's phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Location/address of physician: \_\_\_\_\_

### **D. Emergency contact information:**

Parent/guardian who may be contacted during the event:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address (street): \_\_\_\_\_

Address (postal code, commune): \_\_\_\_\_

Address (country): \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile phone number (include country code): \_\_\_\_\_

Home telephone number (include country code): \_\_\_\_\_

Work telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

If not available, alternate contact:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Relation: \_\_\_\_\_

Address (street): \_\_\_\_\_

Address (postal code, commune): \_\_\_\_\_

Address (country): \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile phone number (include country code): \_\_\_\_\_

Home telephone number (include country code): \_\_\_\_\_

Work telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

This form, as well as a copy of your insurance card and a copy of your vaccination pass must be handed to one of the named leaders on or before the event/camp.

## Community Covenant

When I attend a youth event sponsored by the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe or one of its congregations, I am electing to enter its community. I will assist the Convocation in ensuring that all youth events create a safe, convivial, welcoming atmosphere free of any conduct that threatens physical, emotional or sexual harm or abuse. To this end, I pledge to abide by the standards of behavior established by the Convocation as set forth in this Community Covenant. I will follow all rules and regulations established by my youth leader and by the Convocation and any convention center at which we are guests, including curfews.

Furthermore, I will remain together with my youth group and its youth leader(s) at all times indicated. I will not possess or use: illegal drugs at any time, nor consume alcohol, nor abuse tobacco products of any kind. Nor will I possess or use fireworks, firearms or any other weapons (including concealed knives).

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (name of youth participating),  
have read this Community Covenant. I accept the rules as stated herein and I agree to be bound by them.

Address all questions to the parish hosting the event. See event flyer for all details.

Signed (by participating youth):

Date: