

## CHILD PROTECTION GUIDELINES

1. All adults and youth, both employed and volunteer, who work with minors must be screened and have undergone a criminal background check prior to beginning work. All persons who work with minors must undergo a Screening Process. The steps in the screening process can be found in the document titled "[Screening Checklist](#)". The procedure for obtaining background checks and safety training with Protect My Ministry (PMM) begins with the document entitled, "Initiate Background Check." This is to be completed by the Rector or person delegated by the Rector.
2. Adults who have been convicted of either sexual or physical abuse of children/youth, or those who have a history of inappropriate conduct with children, will not be employed and shall not volunteer service in any church-sponsored activity or program for minors.
3. Adult survivors of childhood sexual or physical abuse need and will receive the love and acceptance of our church family.
4. Employees and volunteers who work with children and youth shall observe the "two-person rule" or the "open door policy" at ALL times. The "two-person rule" requires that employees and volunteers and supervisors shall make every reasonable effort to avoid situations where an employed or volunteer worker is alone with children or youth without a partner. The "open door policy" requires the door to be open at all times. The "two-person rule" will be mandatory for all employees and volunteers who work with our nursery and kindergarten age children.
5. All employees and volunteers working with children and youth are required to be members or active constituents of Grace by the Sea for a minimum of six months before they begin their work. Rectors, Vicars or Priests-in-Charge may waive the six month requirement based on their personal endorsement of the employee or volunteer.
6. The document, "[Child Abuse Reporting Procedures](#)" outlines the steps for recognizing and reporting suspected incidents of abuse, or any behavior which seems abusive or inappropriate. An additional document, "[Child Abuse Response Guidelines](#)", describes appropriate response when incidents of abuse are reported, including responsibility for decision-making and communication regarding the occurrence. Reporting of abuse incidents should follow the format of the "[Child Abuse Report Form](#)" and the report should be recorded on the form.

## IMPLEMENTATION FOR LOCAL PARISHES

We recommend that these guidelines and procedures be adopted by the appropriate church authority (vestry, parish council) and implemented within thirty (30) days of their adoption, with the completion of the initial screening process and background checks within ninety (90) days of adoption.

The Rector and children's ministry leader will have the responsibility to implement and enforce these guidelines and procedures, including the training of employees and volunteers, maintaining all records, ensuring that confidential records are properly maintained, and implementing the screening process (see Screening Checklist).

To facilitate oversight and reporting, it is necessary to have information on all children and youth available to those involved in youth ministry and to have a record of who is responsible for the safety of each child on any given date. It is therefore necessary that each child have a Sunday School Registration form on file, and that registration be updated at the beginning of each school year. Attendance records must be kept for every class and activity/event, including the dates and the names of the adults involved with each group.

In addition, for youth old enough to be involved in church activities outside the regular Sunday School program, the "[Activities Permission Form & Medical Release Form](#)" should be maintained on each child. The Activity Consent Form must be completed for special activities that involve out-of-town travel and/or overnight stays. The files containing these forms must accompany the group on all activities that take place outside the church. Blank copies of the Child Abuse Report Form must be available during all activities involving children/youth. "[Driver Guidelines](#)" must be followed to ensure safety when transporting youth to events away from the church. To initiate the driving record check, [click here](#). Please select the driving record for volunteers.

An annual meeting of all youth ministry workers will be held to review child safety policies and procedures. The meeting agenda will include instruction for reporting incidents of child abuse. Copies of the forms and guidelines needed in the event of abuse will be provided to all youth ministry workers. A "[Child Safety Meeting Record](#)" will be completed for each meeting and will be kept on file along with the meeting agenda.