

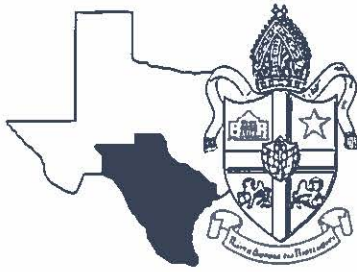


Safeguarding God's Children

**Handbook for Those Who Work with
Children and Youth**



Version 2020



**Office of The Bishop
The Rt. Rev. David M. Reed**

**The Episcopal Diocese
of West Texas**

The Bishop Jones Center

July 2020

Dear Friends in Christ,

Those who have been baptized by water and the Spirit have been buried with Christ in his death and raised with him in his resurrection. We are made a new creation, and have received awesome freedom that is heavily weighted with responsibility. Jesus calls us to love one another as he loves us. We are to love God and love our neighbor. We are to embody and practice godly love in countless ways, but love for those who are vulnerable is consistently God's command to us. "Safeguarding God's Children" is an expression of the Church's commitment to follow that command.

When the earliest versions of what would eventually become "Safeguarding God's Children" were first used in the Diocese of West Texas in the early 1990s, most clergy and people were just beginning to awaken to the terrible reality of sexual abuse of children and youth in our society, and within our churches. Since then, we have learned much more about the pervasiveness of abuse and its long-term damage upon children and young people. We understand more fully the lasting consequences in a congregation when trust is betrayed and children are abused. We are convinced that "Safeguarding" is a vital piece of our churches' (and our schools') life and health.

The "Safeguarding" training that the Diocese of West Texas requires of clergy, lay staff, volunteers who work with children and youth, and school employees and volunteers is intended to help our churches and schools be the places of safety and sanctuary that God intends them to be. The training that participants receive gives them greater awareness and understanding of the responsibility we all share as God's children in the Church. As such, it is nothing less than training for ministry in the Name of Jesus Christ.

I am grateful to all those who take part in this program for the sake of the children and young people entrusted to our care. Our children and young people may hear what we say, but they certainly remember what we do. They learn respect for themselves and for others when we respect them. They learn the love of Jesus when we love them like Jesus does. I'm grateful to you, and to all those who participate in this program, for giving of yourself in this way, so that our children and youth may "grow in knowledge and love of the Lord," and flourish within the Church.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

David Reed
Bishop of West Texas

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About These Policies

This document is a statement of general expectations of behavior in the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas from clergy, lay employees, volunteers, and groups when engaged in ministry with children and youth. These policies are mandated for all ministries and programs of diocesan congregations, entities, organizations, schools, and agencies of the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas.

Local entities may make additions in developing local policy so long as they do not conflict with the requirements of these policies. Any such additions must be submitted in writing to the Diocesan Office for approval.

No policy can foresee every possible circumstance to which it may be applied. Local leadership must understand these policies thoroughly enough to make appropriate judgements about local circumstances. The local entity is required to contact the Safeguarding Office for consultation.

Section I. Definitions

A. Age Categories

1. A **child** is defined as anyone under the age of 12 years.
2. A **youth** is defined as anyone who is at least 12 years old, but not yet 18 years old and also includes anyone who is 18 years old or older and still in high school.
3. An **adult** is defined as anyone who is 18 years or older who is not in high school and who is not a vulnerable adult.
4. A **vulnerable adult** is defined as anyone who is 18 years or older who has special needs of a physical, age-related or mental nature.

B. Personnel

The following are included in the definition of personnel when they are functioning in their respective role for the diocese or for a diocesan organization. **These individuals must complete screening and training in Safeguarding God's Children (SGC) as set out in Section VII:**

1. **All members of the clergy** whether stipendiary, non-stipendiary, canonically resident in the diocese, or licensed in this diocese, who are engaged in ministry or service.
2. **All employees**, full or part time, whether employed in areas of ministry or other kinds of service by the diocese or diocesan organizations, whether or not the employees work directly with children.
3. **Vendors** (those who are not employees but contract their services to the diocese or diocesan organizations) who routinely work with or around children or youth, unless their only contact with children or youth is during a worship service where children and youth are being supervised by other adults. (See also Section VII C, Appendix K)
4. **Volunteers serving in staff positions** whether full time or part time, regardless of whether they work with children or youth.
5. **All persons with general key or code access to locked buildings** where children or youth may be present.
6. **Volunteers in activities for children and youth**, including any person who offers to serve in activities for children and youth or who actually assists with such activities.
7. **All volunteers whose work routinely takes them throughout the facility or grounds** when children or youth are present, other than during a worship service where the children and youth are being supervised by other adults.

8. **Youth who assist in ministries or programs** for children or youth such as camp, Vacation Bible School, childcare, mission trips, or retreats. They must have permission.
9. **All persons who provide** transportation to children or youth without other adults in the vehicle.
10. **Any person whose living quarters are on the grounds** of the church, school or other related agency.
11. **Parents who assist more than six (6) times per year** with a program in which their child is enrolled, including transportation.

Examples of personnel include, but are not limited to:

- Children's or youth choir directors
- Sunday school teachers and staff
- Vacation Bible School/ Camp teachers and staff
- Lay youth formation directors and directors of Christian education
- Nursery workers
- All adults who supervise children in any capacity
- Teachers, substitute teachers, and staff in parochial or other Episcopal schools, full or part-time, contract or volunteer
- Adults who participate in overnight activities with children or youth
- Security guards or regular maintenance persons who work with or around children

C. Terms

Abuse: includes **physical abuse** (non-accidental injury intentionally inflicted upon a child or youth, **sexual abuse** (any sexual contact, indecency, or activity of a sexual nature with a minor), and **emotional abuse** (mental or emotional injury to a child or youth that results in an observable and material impairment in the child's or youth's growth, development, or psychological functioning).

Bullying: Behavior that intimidates, humiliates, offends, degrades, or harms another person, whether verbally, psychologically, or physically.

Cisgender: An 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 develop.

Clergy in Charge: A member of the clergy who is in charge of a program for children and youth. In a congregation, this is the head of the congregation unless he or she has appointed another clergy staff member as the Clergy in Charge of a program.

Diocese: The Episcopal Diocese of West Texas

Gender Non-Binary: An umbrella term for people who identify their gender as neither male nor female. These people might identify as both ("bigender"), neither ("agender"), or "gender non-conforming". This is an evolving term, as our understanding and language around gender identity and sexuality develop.

Intake Officer: The person(s) designated by the diocese to receive information regarding an offense for which a member of the clergy may 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 an Intake Officer to report concerns.

LGBTQ+: An acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/ Questioning, and others. It refers to people whose gender identities vary from their sex assigned at birth, or whose sexual orientation differ 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 develop.

Mandated Reporter: A person who is required by state law to report reasonable suspicions of abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation of vulnerable populations to the appropriate state agency. Under Texas law, all adults are mandatory reporters of suspected abuse of children or youth.

Neglect: The failure to provide for a child’s or youth’s basic needs and/ or medical needs to take action to protect a child or youth from harm.

Off-Site: Any location other than the facility of the diocese or diocesan organization in which the ministry is based.

Organizations: All institutions authorized by the diocese or its congregations, including fellowships, missional communities, college ministries, schools, camps, retreat centers, and social service organizations.

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

Peer Abuse: Any bullying or abuse occurring between children, between a child and a youth, or between youth.

Programs: Official activities and programs sponsored by the diocese or its organizations.

Responsible Person: The person designated as being accountable for compliance with this policy for an event or program. Such person must be (i) an adult who has been trained and screened under these policies, and (ii) physically present during the event.

Sacramental Use: Consecrated or unconsecrated wine used in the setting of Eucharist.

Supervisor: A person who has oversight responsibilities for a ministry program and/ or personnel in ministry program. The Supervisor may or may not be the Clergy in Charge and/ or the Responsible Person.

Title IV: A section of the *Constitution of Canons of the Episcopal Church* pertaining to clergy professional standards, accountability and ecclesiastical discipline.

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

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

Transporting: Insuring for travel on all off sites events from the facility of the organization to the event back to the organization

Travel: An event for children and youth that involves spending the night outside of the facility of the organization.

Youth Helper: A youth who assists adult personnel in a program involving children and youth.

Section II. Creating Safe and Healthy Environments

A. Behavioral Standards for Personnel

These guidelines will help identify and prevent behaviors and interactions which may be used to “groom” children, youth and their parents, or which may create conditions where abuse by adults or peers can more easily occur. They are not designed or intended to address interactions within families.

1. Personnel **will treat children and youth with equal respect and consideration**, regardless of sex, race, religion, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or socio-economic status. Personnel should not show favoritism. They will portray a positive role model for children and youth by maintaining an attitude of respect, patience, and maturity. Using preferred pronouns is an important way to show respect to children and youth who are not cisgender.
2. Personnel will **conduct any one-to-one talks** with children and youth in open or public place where private conversations are possible but occur in full view of others. A Responsible Person shall be informed in advance about any planned conversations. When such conversation is unplanned, the Responsible Person shall be informed as soon as practical.
3. **Personnel are encouraged to offer appropriate displays of affection that respects physical, emotional, and behavioral boundaries**, including but not limited to the following examples:
 - High fives and fist bumps
 - Handholding while walking with small children or in prayer
 - Brief touching of shoulders, hand, or arms
 - “Laying on of hands” under appropriate pastoral supervision
 - Brief hugs and arms around shoulders
4. Personnel **shall not engage in behaviors that cross physical, emotional, and behavioral boundaries**, including but not limited to the following examples:
 - Any unwanted form of physical affection
 - Inappropriate or lengthy embraces
 - Kisses on the mouth
 - Holding children over 3 years old on the lap
 - Touching bottoms, chests, or genital areas other than appropriate diapering and toileting of infants/ toddlers
 - Showing affection in isolated areas such as bedrooms, staff-only areas
 - Touching knees or legs, wrestling, or tickling children or youth
 - Piggyback rides
 - Any type of massage given by a child or youth to an adult
 - Any type of massage given by an adult to children or youth
 - Snapping bras, giving “wedgies,” or similar touching of underwear
 - Comments or compliments (spoken, written or electronic) about physique or body development
 - Giving money or gifts to individual children or youth
 - Private meals with individual children or youth
 - Inappropriate interaction on social media

5. Personnel who develop **private relationships** with children or youth outside of ministry activities (e.g., as babysitters or for yard maintenance) only 1) with the permission of parents or guardians and 2) notify the Supervisor or Responsible Person of the program in which the personnel and child or youth are involved.
6. Personnel **shall not use, posses, distribute, or be under the influence** of alcohol or illegal drugs, or misuse legal drugs or prescription medications while participating in or assisting with programs or activities specifically for children and youth.
7. Personnel **shall not provide children or youth with non-sacramental alcohol, marijuana, drugs, tobacco products, e-cigarettes, vapes, or pornography.**
8. Personnel **shall not engage in sexual contact with a child or youth or become romantically involved** with a child or youth.
9. Personnel **shall not possess, download, or view any sexually oriented or explicit materials** on the property of the diocese or any organization or in the presence of children and youth (with the exception of sexually oriented materials that are part of an education program that is pre-authorized by the diocese or the head of the organization).
10. Personnel **shall not discuss their own sexual activities**, including dreams and fantasies, or discuss with children or youth their use of sexually oriented or explicit materials such as pornography, videos, or materials.
11. Personnel **shall not sleep in the same bed** or sleeping bag with children or youth unless the adult is an immediate family member.
12. Personnel **shall not use physical punishment** in any way for behavior management of children and youth, including spanking, slapping, pinching, or any other physical force. Physical force may only be used to stop behavior that may cause immediate harm to the child or to others.
13. Personnel **shall not use harsh language**, profanity, degrading punishment, or any mechanical restraint for behavior management.

B. Sexual Activity between Children/ Youth

Sexual activity of any kind between children and youth is not appropriate in connection with activities sponsored by the diocese or organization, regardless of where it takes place. Personnel must intervene to stop such activity by a child or youth and report it immediately as a policy violation and may need to report it as abuse. (See *Section VIII*)

C. Basic Needs

No one is to be deprived of the basic human needs of food, drinking water, shelter, adequate sleep, access to restrooms, safety, and clothing at any event. Adequate sleep means the opportunity to sleep for at least 7 hours.

Exceptions may be made for programs intended to teach children or youth about poverty, needs, and hunger, such as intentional fasting program. In these cases, children and youth must agree to participate in writing, and parents or guardians must give written permission that includes certification that the youth or child does not have a medical condition that would put the participant at risk by fasting or missing sleep. Participants who wish to withdraw or who are unable to complete the program must have their basic needs met immediately.

D. First Aid and Medications

At all activities for youth or children, the following rules apply:

1. **First Aid Kit:** An appropriately stocked first aid kit shall be available in an easily accessible location.
2. **Medications:** All medications (prescription and over the counter) belonging to minors shall be given to the Responsible Person, unless otherwise agreed upon by the parents and the Responsible Person. Recommended exceptions to this can be inhalers and epi-pens. Subject to the above exception, the Responsible Person and an adult designee shall administer all medications.
3. **Records:** A record must be kept for all medications or first aid given to a participant that includes the name of the person administering the medication or treatment, and a description of the medication, dosage, and/or treatment.
4. **Current Certification:** Current certification in First Aid, CPR, and Automated External Defibrillator (AED) is encouraged for persons working with children and youth.

E. Discrimination and Harassment

The Episcopal Diocese of West Texas prohibits discrimination or harassment toward any person based on race, color, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, religion, or disabilities. Personnel must report immediately incidents of discrimination or harassment under the provisions of *Section VIII*.

F. Bullying

Bullying violates a person's sense of worth and his or her immeasurable value to God. Bullying is manifested in various ways: abusive language, offensive name calling, acts or threats of physical abuse, vandalism, theft, or destruction of property. Bullying of all forms, including bullying or bullying based on sexual orientation or gender identification or expression, inhibit a person's ability to feel safe in our organizations. Bullying of any form will not be tolerated in organizations of the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas. Personnel must report incidents of bullying under the provisions of *Section VII*.

G. Weapons and Violence

1. **Specific Weapons Policy Involving Children and Youth:** Children and youth shall not have weapons of any kind at any event or program for children and youth except as expressly permitted in camp programs or other programs with prior approval from the head of the organization.
2. **Violence:** No one is to strike, hit, or otherwise physically threaten or harm anyone at any time at activities involving children or youth.

H. Alcohol

All alcohol, including alcohol for sacramental use, must be stored in an area inaccessible to children and youth. Alcohol may not be served at events designed for children and youth except for sacramental use.

Section III. Monitoring and Supervision of Programs

Personnel must monitor and supervise programs for children and youth so that inappropriate behaviors by adults, youth, and other children can be detected and stopped. The following rules apply whether or not the programs take place on property belonging to the diocese or organization.

A. Accessibility of Information

The Handbook for Those Who Work with Children and Youth shall be posted in an area where activities for children or youth take place, **along with the names and phone numbers of the member of the Clergy in Charge (if applicable), the program Supervisor, the head of organization, and (in the case of congregation) a Warden.** Such information shall be given to all parents, guardians, and personnel.

B. Approval and Tracking of Activities

No new activities for children and youth shall be developed without written approval of the head of the organization (or in case of the diocese, of the person in the bishop's office who oversees programs for children and youth). Requests for new activities must be in writing so that the head can assure that any activity includes adequate adult supervision. An **up-to-date list** of approved programs for children and youth will be maintained by the diocese or organization in the office where such records are kept.

C. Responsible Person

For every youth or children's event, a **Responsible Person (as defined in Section I.C)** shall be **appointed** by the program Supervisor. (See also Appendix E)

D. Two Adults Rule

Except as expressly provided elsewhere in these policies, there shall always be at least two unrelated adult personnel present at ministry settings and events designed for children and youth.

E. Unanticipated Circumstances

If unanticipated circumstances result in **an adult's being alone with children or youth**, that adult shall report those circumstances to the Responsible Person, Supervisor, and Clergy in Charge as soon as possible.

F. Unrelated Persons

No person will be permitted to supervise an immediate family member unless another unrelated adult is present. An immediate family member is defined as the spouse, parent, child, sibling, grandparent, partner, or co-habitant. This also applies to in-law and stepfamily relationships. Related persons may minister together so long as at least one other unrelated adult is present who has been screened and trained under these policies.

G. Ratios

The presence of two unrelated adults is required at all times for any church program or activity for children or youth. The following adult to child/ youth ratios must be observed:

1. **Schools or camps** that are accredited or licensed may observe the adult to child ratio as established by the accrediting or licensing agency.

2. **For any other program or activity, the following adult to child ratios must be maintained: The presence of two unrelated adults is required at all times for any church program or activity for children or youth. In addition, the following ratios must be maintained.**

Infants (0-11 mo.)	1:3 (Two adults to three infants, then this ratio)
1-5 years	1:5 for overnight participants and 1:6 for day participants
6-8 years	1:6 overnight and 1:8 day
9-14 years	1:8 overnight and 1:10 day
15-18 years	1:10 overnight and 1:12 day

H. Release

Programs for infants and children under six years old must have procedures to ensure that children are released only to their parents or to those designated by their parents or guardians.

I. Classroom Visibility and Security

Classrooms or other areas used by children or youth **must have windows or a window in the door so that casual monitoring can occur.** At least one window must be **unobstructed by blinds, curtains, drapes, or posters, except as part of a lock-down during a drill or an active security threat.** Doors of occupied classrooms must be unlocked at all times during activities, except that doors may be locked from the inside in occupied classrooms when recommended as a security measure by law enforcement or a security audit. Unused rooms should be locked or otherwise made inaccessible.

J. Private Activities

Each program will follow procedures to ensure the safety of children and youth using restrooms, locker rooms, showers, or baths and during diapering.

1. No adult may shower, bathe, or use restroom facilities in the presence of children or youth.
2. When supervising or assisting private activities such as dressing, showering, or diapering infants or children, **personnel will remain in an area observable** by other adults or work in pairs. **Children and youth must be supervised at all times to prevent incidents of Peer Abuse.**
3. Safe restrooms, locker rooms, and shower facilities will be provided by gender (or specific times will be assigned for the use of a single facility according to gender identification). **No child or youth should be required to use a locker room, shower, or restroom that conflicts with their gender identity.** Transgender or gender non-conforming children or youth who express the need or desire for increased privacy should be provided with reasonable alternative arrangements whenever possible. Such arrangements may include the use of a private area or separate changing or showering schedule, or the use of a single stall restroom. To the extent possible, any alternative arrangement should be provided in a way that protects the child or youth's ability to keep their gender status confidential.
4. **Diapering** must be done at diapering stations in proximity to other care providers and not behind closed doors or in isolated places.

5. Age Appropriate Restroom Supervision

An adult must accompany all children **age two (2) through Kindergarten** to the restroom.

- a. If facilities are removed from the activity or classroom, the adult must check the bathroom to see if other adults are present before allowing the child to go in.
- b. If the restrooms are in a public space and the absence of other adults cannot be achieved, the adult must be especially vigilant about the safety of the child.
- c. If there is no stall in the restroom, the adult should stand outside the door while the child uses the bathroom.
- d. If there are stalls, the child should go into the stall alone. The adult should assist the child only if necessary, in which case the stall door and, if possible, the outer door should remain ajar. The adult should not go into the restroom with the child and close the door or into the stall and close the door.
- e. If the restroom is in the classroom with only one toilet, the child should go alone into the restroom.

K. Social Media

All digital communications must comply with the same Safeguarding policies as all other Episcopal Diocese organizations. The following guidelines apply commonly accepted principles of healthy boundaries for social networking, communications, online forums, and gaming. (Appendix J)

1. **Implement consistent privacy settings** that respect personal boundaries with all participants across all platforms.
 - a. Remember that privacy settings do not ensure confidentiality.
 - b. Each congregation / school / organization should develop and publish agreed upon privacy settings that staff and volunteers will use, and make that information available to parishioners, teachers, students, parents, and employees.
2. **Be accountable.**
 - a. Adults (parents) should be aware of how leaders utilize social media platforms and appropriate methods of communication.
 - b. Communication should be with groups, in public areas rather than in private messages. This includes image sharing.
 - c. When personnel see any electronic pastoral communications that raise questions or concerns or are of a potentially harmful nature, they should be saved and disclosed to the supervising head of the congregation, school or organizations and, as appropriate, to parents. (Example: bullying abuse, etc.)
 - d. Ministry presence on social media platforms should have more than one adult administrator.
3. **Social media is rarely appropriate for a sensitive matter** requiring pastoral care. In those instances, a face-to-face meeting or phone call is preferable as it allows for an assessment of tone and demeanor that can be helpful in evaluating the situation and determining both urgency and appropriateness of a response.

4. **Frequently review your accessible content** and photos. Keep informed about new and emerging social media platforms.
5. **Online Groups** are required to follow the same Safeguarding policies as all other diocesan entities. In group communication platforms, users shall create covenants to govern group communication by addressing:
 - Purpose and intent of the group
 - Appropriate and inappropriate language and behavior; profane or derogatory language is forbidden
 - Who may join and / or view a group activity
 - Content that may be posted / published on the site or page
 - How images will be taken and shared
 - Consequences for breaking the covenant, which may include removal from group
 - Mandatory reporting rules
6. **Any inappropriate material posted in online groups must be removed from the page** but should be saved by the administrator and reported to the ministry leader to be addressed or reported as necessary.
7. **When video chatting**, be mindful of appropriate attire and surroundings, as they are visible to the viewer. One-on-one video chatting should follow the same Safeguarding guidelines as when meeting with people face-to-face. Do not video chat behind closed doors.
8. **If posting photos of children online** or in any publication, obtain a photo release from parents. (This should be done annually for schools and programs). Do not provide personal or identifying information about the children or youth pictured.

Same **Photo Release** wording to be added to school and program registration:

"I understand that photos or videos of my child and others may be taken during Sunday school and other church / school / organization events. I consent to the use of my child's photo or likeness in promotional materials such as church / school / organization website and other social media outlets. I understand that my child's identifying information will not be provided unless I give permission at a later time."
9. **Be aware that all communications sent digitally are not confidential** and potentially can be shared or reposted to other platforms or people without an individual's permission or knowledge.
10. **Use prudent judgement in the timing of your communications**; for example, consider work hours, school hours, mealtimes, vacations, and sleep schedules.
11. **Reporting**: Laws regarding mandated reporting of suspected child abuse or exploitation of children, youth, elders, and vulnerable adults apply in the virtual world just as they do in the physical world. Report suspected abuse to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services: 800-252-5400. The rules of reporting found in *Section VII* of these policies also apply.

Section IV. Prior Parental Approval and Registration, Waiver, and Release Forms

A. Prior Approval by Parent

Prior approval by a parent or guardian is required prior to:

1. A minor's viewing any movie rated "PG-13" or above or participating in any program containing sexually explicit or violent content. Such approval must be in writing.
2. A minor's being photographed or recorded on film, videotape, audiotape, or other electronic media.
3. A minor's image or voice being posted online or in any form of social media. Such approval must be in writing.
4. A minor's participating in any off-site event. For each off-site event, a permission slip must be signed by a parent or guardian.
5. A minor's participating in any sexually oriented educational program.

B. Registration, Waiver and Release Forms

A parent or guardian needs to complete a registration form and a waiver and release form before a minor may participate in any programs for children or youth (Appendix G). Confidentiality must be held with respect to medical and other sensitive information in the forms. Such forms can encompass a program year and must be maintained in a secure location on-site or electronically.

Section V. Off-Site Events, Travel, and Overnight Events

A. Prior Approval of Off-Site Events

Prior approval of any off-site event must be given by the head of organization and one of the following: 1) the governing body of the organization, 2) the executive committee of the governing body, or 3) in the case of a congregation, a warden of the congregation.

B. Adult Supervision

1. Except as provided in 2 below, at any off-site event for children and youth, there shall be at least two unrelated adults with one being age 25 or older.
2. In the case of an off-site event involving travel (as defined in *I.C.*), at least three unrelated adults shall chaperone the trip, with one being age 25 or older, and the minimum ratios of adults to youth increase as follows:

9-14 years – 1:5

15-18 years – 1:7

C. Transporting Children and Youth

1. For off-site events that originate/terminate at the organization, all **drivers must be at least 21 years of age and provide proof of insurance, a current driver's license appropriate to the vehicle, and all required volunteer paperwork.** In addition, a background check as a volunteer.
2. When transporting children or youth in vehicles, **two adults** must be in each vehicle, except when multiple vehicles travel in a caravan. **A roster of children assigned to drivers must include names and contact numbers for all adults and must be provided to all drivers.**

3. All drivers and riders must **comply with state and local laws**, including seat belt and cell phone usage.
4. **Parents/ guardians are responsible for the transportation and safety of their children or youth to and from the facility of the organization or directly to off-site events that do not originate and terminate at the facility.** This responsibility includes the transportation of any other passengers in their vehicle.

D. Overnight Events

1. In overnight programming, particular consideration must be given to disabled children and youth to LGBTQ+ children and youth. When requested, **preferences of these individuals merit additional consideration, accommodation, and action** to provide safety, privacy, equal opportunity to participate, and to prevent or minimize stigmatization of the participants who are not cisgender.
2. When both boys and girls are participating in overnight activities, it is required that both male and female chaperones attend.
3. Except as provided in *Section II.C*, participants must have access to three meals per full day, have the opportunity for at least 7 hours of sleep each day, and have some time set aside each day for rest or free time.
4. It is recommended that in the case of a hotel stay:
 - a. There be at least three children/youth per room and that consideration be given to the relative age and size of the children or youth,
 - b. Adults have rooms on the same floor, scattered among the rooms with children/youth, and at least one adult room is by the stairs or elevator, and
 - c. The Responsible Person assigns the rooms and room occupants.

Section VI. Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct for Safeguarding God's Children (SGC) is required by the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas to help create safe environments for children/youth and for those who minister to them. Persons who cannot agree to this conduct are not allowed to serve in ministry to children and youth. Personnel are asked to carefully consider each Code statement and all SGC policies before signing the acknowledgment at the end of the Safeguarding God's Children Training.

- I will not physically, sexually, or emotionally abuse or neglect a child or youth.
- I will do my best to prevent abuse and neglect among the children and youth involved in the activities and services of the congregations, schools, and organizations of the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas.
- I will comply in spirit and in action with the policies in the *Handbook for Those Who Work with Children and Youth*.
- I will immediately report my observations of inappropriate behaviors or boundary violations as outlined in these policies.
- I will report immediately known or suspected abuse to state and diocesan authorities.
- I will immediately seek advice from the Safeguarding Office if I have any questions or concerns about these policies or their expectations.

Section VII. Safeguarding Certification Requirements

A. Certifications

1. In order to be certified in *Safeguarding God's Children*, **Personnel must be screened and trained under these policies unless they qualify for an exception under Section VII.C.** No person will be allowed to volunteer regularly with children or youth until the person has completed screening, has a background check on file, and has attended training.
2. Certifications for Lay Personnel are managed by the administration of the organization in which they serve.
3. Clergy certifications are managed by the Diocesan office. Contact the Diocesan office to verify certification and for information on training opportunities.
4. The Safeguarding Record Systems (SRS) of the diocese will be used to obtain and retain all required documentation for screening and training. Except as provided in *Section VII.C*, persons will be certified in the Diocesan office only after the screening and training steps have been completed.

All Personnel who are employees or volunteers must:

- Complete a personal **interview**
 - Complete an **application and reference checks** for either volunteer or paid positions
 - Consent to a nationwide sex offender and criminal history **background check** in any state where the applicant has resided in the past ten years.
 - **Complete Safeguarding God's Children training** and sign the Code of Conduct, and Acknowledgment Release and Signature form.
5. All information gathered about an applicant must be carefully reviewed and evaluated to determine whether the person is appropriate to work with children or youth. **No person who is known to have a civil or criminal conviction or record of child abuse, or who has admitted to sexual abuse, may be employed or permitted to volunteer to work with or around children in the Diocese.**

B. Deadlines, Recertification, and Transfers of Location

- 1) Safeguarding certification must be completed within 30 days of hire or start date prior to working with children or youth. In the interim, anyone not certified must be supervised at all times by an adult screened and trained in Safeguarding God's Children.
- 2) Lay personnel who transfer within the Diocese of West Texas should contact the Safeguarding Office to update their new location. Clergy who transfer from another Episcopal diocese must contact the Safeguarding office to arrange for Safeguarding God's Children training.
- 3) All individuals must be certified following the Diocesan policies.
- 4) Recertification must be **completed every five (5) years**. This includes updating contact information, a new background check, and training. **For recertification, contact the Diocesan office.**

C. Training Only Agreement for Vendors and Non-Episcopal Partners in Ministry

Vendors and Non-Episcopal Partners in Ministry: When the diocese or an organization 1) uses a vendor to provide services with or around children, or 2) partners with a vendor/ business to run a ministry or program that involves children or youth, the vendor/ business must comply with the Safeguarding policies and requirements of the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas.

This Safeguarding *Training Only Agreement* is available at the Diocesan office and must be submitted annually. The agreement states that the vendor/ business has following screening procedures for their volunteers and/ or employees:

- Nationwide criminal and sex offender background check
- Application and reference checks

Adults from non-Episcopal vendor/ business who are covered by a *Training Only Agreement* must complete Safeguarding God's Children training, including a review of the *Handbook for Those Who Work with Children and Youth*.

Examples of programs that may use outsourced organizations and staff:

- After school care
- Sports clinics
- Mentoring programs
- Mission trips, retreats or lock-ins
- School Enrichment programs
- Youth Clubs

Section VIII. Reporting

A. Suspected Abuse or Neglect of Children or Youth

1. Anyone who has reason to suspect that abuse or neglect of a child or youth has taken place is required to contact the police or the Texas Department of Family Protective Services (1-800-252-5400, or online at Texas Abuse Hotline). The TDFPS does not accept emailed reports. In case of an emergency, call 911. Failure to report suspected neglect or abuse is a crime. For guidance on making a report, see the Child Protective Services Guide in *Appendix A* or call the number above.
2. **In addition**, anyone who has reason to suspect that **abuse or neglect has taken place within a facility or in connection with a program of the diocese or an organization** should immediately inform the following:
 - In the case of the **diocese**, inform the Canon Caroline Mowen.
 - In the case of an organization, inform the Responsible Person, Supervisor, or Warden (of a congregation), and the head of the organization. A report does not need to be made to anyone who is the subject of the complaint. **If the head of the organization is the subject of the complaint, then the report must be made directly to the Canon Caroline Mowen;**
 - Anytime that a **member of the clergy is suspected** of abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation, inform the Intake Officer/Canon Caroline Mowen. (See *Section VIII.C*)

3. The **head of an organization who has received a report under this section shall immediately inform the Canon Caroline Mowen**, so that immediate and proper steps taken, including a determination of who should make the report to the Texas Department of Family Protective Services and providing for appropriate pastoral care for affected persons. (See *Section VIII. C*)

B. Behaviors Inconsistent with Policies

Personnel must report any behaviors they observe that are inconsistent with policies set forth in the *Handbook for Those Who Work with Children and Youth*, but which do not constitute knowledge or suspicion of abuse or neglect. Examples of such inconsistent behaviors include:

- Seeking private time with children or youth
- Sexual exploration between youth or children
- Taking children or youth on overnight trips without other adults
- Swearing or making suggestive comments to children or youth
- Using staff or volunteers without Safeguarding God's Children certification

1. Personnel observing inappropriate behaviors shall make a report immediately by email, phone, or meeting as follows

- To the Responsible Person, Supervisor, a Warden (of a congregation), or to the head of the organization;
- Unless the policy violation or inappropriate behavior is directly attributable to the head of the organization, any Responsible Person, Clergy in Charge, or Warden who receives a report shall immediately report the same **to the head of organization**. If the inappropriate behaviors or policy violations continue, a report must also be made to Canon Caroline Mowen (see *Section VIII.C*)

2. The head of the organization who receives a report of inappropriate behavior or a policy violation shall immediately report the same to the Canon Caroline Mowen.

C. Diocesan Contact / Intake Officer

Caroline Mowen, Canon for Administration and Ministry Support
111 Torcido Dr (mail to: P.O. Box 6885)
San Antonio, TX 78209
210-415-7372 cell or 210-547-4009 direct office phone
Caroline.mowen@dwtx.org

D. Methods for Reporting

Reports may be made by phone, email, letter, or in person. (Use Appendix B)

E. Reporting Protection

No one who reports a violation of these policies will be retaliated against or adversely treated because a complaint was made.

F. Investigation and Enforcement

Reports of inappropriate behavior involving children/youth are taken seriously and will be investigated. The diocese may remove from ministry or place on administrative leave any individual who is the subject of a complaint during the investigation. If the investigation substantiates that the complaint is valid, immediate corrective action will be taken.

Appendix A

Guidance in Reporting Neglect or Abuse of Children or Youth

1. The head of the organization, together with the Safeguarding Minister or Canon to the Ordinary, may help determine who best should make the report to the police or department of Family and Protective Services.
2. To report known or suspected abuse, call the toll free, 24 hour, seven days a week hotline 1-800-252-5400 OR online at Texas Abuse Hotline. DFPS does not accept e-mail reports. (See Texas Family Code). To report an emergency, call 911. The report should be specific and objective and made as soon as possible, but no later than 48 hours after the reporter knows or suspects abuse. A record should be made of all injuries or incidents observed, including the dates and times of day. This information should be included in the report, along with any available information on the relationship between the child and the suspected abuser, and (to the extent known), the following information.
3. Reports may be made anonymously. A report is confidential and is not subject to public release under the Open Records Act. The law provides immunity from liability for persons who report suspected abuse in good faith and without malice. Simply stated, “in good faith” means that the reporter believes what he or she is reporting to be true.
4. Anyone who has reason to suspect child abuse but is not positive should make a report. For guidance as to what is cause for reasonable suspicion, see the *Child Protective Service Guide* provided by childwelfare.gov. If there are doubts about whether what has been observed constitutes abuse, a person should call the hotline for guidance.

CONFIDENTIAL NOTICE OF CONCERN

APPENDIX B

Please immediately complete the information below if you know of a concern.

Date: _____

Congregation: _____ City: _____

Who is the complaint about? _____

What is the type of concern:

- ☐ Inappropriate behavior
- ☐ Abuse
- ☐ Policy Violation
- ☐ Other: _____

Was a child or youth involved?

☐ YES ☐ NO

What happened? _____

Use additional paper if more space is required.

When did it happen? _____ Where did it happen? _____

Was anyone else present? ☐ YES Who? _____

☐ NO

Was it reported to the Authorities? ☐ YES Who? _____

☐ NO

Has this happened before? ☐ YES When? _____

☐ NO

Would you like the Canon to follow-up with you to discuss the concern?

☐ YES

☐ NO

Optional (information needed to discuss concern)

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Signature: _____

Additional Comments: _____

Please send completed form by email, mail, or fax to the Canon for the Diocese.

Caroline Mowen
Canon for Administration and Ministry Support
P.O. Box 6885; San Antonio, TX 78209
(210) 547-4009 office
(210) 415-7372 cell
(210) 824-1312 fax

TEXAS CHILD ABUSE REPORTING

APPENDIX C

Report Abuse or Neglect of Children, Elderly, or People with Disabilities

To report an emergency, call 911. To report child abuse or neglect, call 1-800-252-5400 or use a secure website: www.txabusehotline.org. Other states can call 512-834-3784 to report abuse or neglect that has occurred in Texas.

- Child abuse and neglect are against the law in Texas, and so is failure to report it.
- If you suspect a child has been abused or mistreated, you are required to report it to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services or to a law enforcement agency.
- You are required to make a report within 48 hours of the time you suspected the child has been or may be abused or neglected.

What is Abuse?

Abuse is mental, emotional, physical, or sexual injury to a child or failure to prevent such injury to a child.

What is Neglect?

Neglect includes 1) failure to provide a child with food, clothing, shelter, and/or medical care; and/or 2) leaving a child in a situation where the child is at risk of harm.

How Do I Make a Report?

- Call the abuse and neglect hotline 1-800-252-5400
- When you make a report, be specific. Tell exactly what happened and when. Be sure to record all injuries or incidents you have observed, including dates and times of day and keep this information secured.
- Reports should be made as soon as possible, but no later than 48 hours before bruises and marks start to fade. It is important for the investigators to be able to see the physical signs.
- Give the agency person any information you have about the relationship between the child and the suspected abuser.
- Please provide at least the following information in your report
 - Name, age, and address of the child
 - Brief description of the child
 - Current injuries, medical problems, or behavior problems
 - Parents names and names of any siblings in the home

Will the Person Know I've Reported Him/Her?

Your report is confidential and is not subject to public release under the Open Records Act. The law provides for immunity from civil or criminal liability for innocent persons who report even unfounded suspicions, as long as your report is made in good faith. Your identity is kept confidential.

What if I'm Not Sure?

If you have reason to suspect child abuse, but are not positive, make the report. If you have any doubts about whether or not it is abuse, call the hotline. They can advise you on whether the signs you have observed are abuse.

TEXAS STATUTES FAMILY CODE

TITLE 5, SUBTITLE E, CHAPTER 261

TITLE 5: THE PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP AND THE SUIT AFFECTING THE PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP

SUBTITLE E: PROTECTION OF THE CHILD

CHAPTER 261: INVESTIGATION OF REPORT OF CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT

SUBCHAPTER A: GENERAL PROVISIONS

SECTION 261.001

Definitions

1. In this chapter:
 - a. "Abuse" includes the following acts or omissions by a person: mental or emotional injury to a child that results in an observable and material impairment in the child's growth, development, or psychological functioning;

- b. causing or permitting the child to be in a situation in which the child sustains a mental or emotional injury that results in an observable and material impairment in the child's growth, development, or psychological functioning;
 - c. physical injury that results in substantial harm to the child, or the genuine threat of substantial harm from physical injury to the child, including an injury that is at variance with the history or explanation given and excluding an accident or reasonable discipline by a parent, guardian, or managing or possessory conservator that does not expose the child to a substantial risk of harm;
 - d. failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent an action by another person that results in physical injury that results in substantial harm to the child;
 - e. sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare, including conduct that constitutes the offense of continuous sexual abuse of young child or children under Section 21.02, Penal Code, indecency with a child under Section 21.11, Penal Code, sexual assault under Section 22.011, Penal Code, or aggravated sexual assault under Section 22.021, Penal Code;
 - f. failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct harmful to a child;
 - g. compelling or encouraging the child to engage in sexual conduct as defined by Section 43.01, Penal Code, including compelling or encouraging the child in a manner that constitutes an offense of trafficking of persons under Section 20A.02(a)(7) or (8), Penal Code, prostitution under Section 43.02(b), Penal Code, or compelling prostitution under Section 43.05(a)(2), Penal Code;
 - h. causing, permitting, encouraging, engaging in, or allowing the photographing, filming, or depicting of the child if the person knew or should have known that the resulting photograph, film, or depiction of the child is obscene as defined by Section 43.21, Penal Code, or pornographic;
 - i. the current use by a person of a controlled substance as defined by Chapter 481, Health and Safety Code, in a manner or to the extent that the use results in physical, mental, or emotional injury to a child;
 - j. causing, expressly permitting, or encouraging a child to use a controlled substance as defined by Chapter 481, Health and Safety Code;
 - k. causing, permitting, encouraging, engaging in, or allowing a sexual performance by a child as defined by Section 43.25, Penal Code;
 - l. knowingly causing, permitting, encouraging, engaging in, or allowing a child to be trafficked in a manner punishable as an offense under Section 20A.02(a)(5), (6), (7), or (8), Penal Code, or the failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent a child from being trafficked in a manner punishable as an offense under any of those sections; or
 - m. forcing or coercing a child to enter into a marriage.
2. "Department" means the Department of Family and Protective Services
 3. "Exploitation" means the illegal or improper use of a child or of the resources of a child for monetary or personal benefit, profit, or gain by an employee, volunteer, or other individual working under the auspices of a facility or program as further described by rule or policy.
 4. "Neglect" includes:
 - a. the leaving of a child in a situation where the child would be exposed to a substantial risk of physical or mental harm, without arranging for necessary care for the child, and the demonstration of an intent not to return by a parent, guardian, or managing or possessory conservator of the child;
 - b. the following acts or omissions by a person:
 - i. placing a child in or failing to remove a child from a situation that a reasonable person would realize requires judgment or actions beyond the child's level of maturity, physical condition, or mental abilities and that results in bodily injury or a substantial risk of immediate harm to the child;
 - ii. failing to seek, obtain, or follow through with medical care for a child, with the failure resulting in or presenting a substantial risk of death, disfigurement, or bodily injury or with the failure resulting in an observable and material impairment to the growth, development, or functioning of the child;
 - iii. the failure to provide a child with food, clothing, or shelter necessary to sustain the life or health of the child, excluding failure caused primarily by financial inability unless relief services had been offered and refused;
 - iv. placing a child in or failing to remove the child from a situation in which the child would be exposed to a substantial risk of sexual conduct harmful to the child; or
 - v. placing a child in or failing to remove the child from a situation in which the child would be exposed to acts or omissions that constitute abuse under Subdivision (1)(E), (F), (G), (H), or (K) committed against another child;
 - c. the failure by the person responsible for a child's care, custody, or welfare to permit the child to return to the child's home without arranging for the necessary care for the child after the child has

been absent from the home for any reason, including having been in residential placement or having a run away; or

- d. a negligent act or omission by an employee, volunteer, or other individual working under the auspices of a facility or program, including failure to comply with an individual treatment plan, plan of care, or individualized service plan, that causes or may cause substantial emotional harm or physical injury to, or the death of, a child served by the facility or program as further described by rule or policy; and
- 5. "Person responsible for a child's care, custody, or welfare" means a person who traditionally is responsible for a child's care, custody, or welfare, including:
 - a. a parent, guardian, managing or possessory conservator, or foster parent of the child;
 - b. a member of the child's family or household as defined by Chapter 71;
 - c. a person with whom the child's parent cohabits;
 - d. school personnel or a volunteer at the child's school;
 - e. personnel or a volunteer at a public or private child-care facility that provides services for the child or at a public or private residential institution or facility where the child resides; or
 - f. an employee, volunteer, or other person working under the supervision of a licensed or unlicensed child-care facility, including a family home, residential child-care facility, employer-based day-care facility, or shelter day-care facility, as those terms are defined in Chapter 42, Human Resources Code.
- 6. "Report" means a report that alleged or suspected abuse or neglect of a child has occurred or may occur.
- 7. "Severe emotional disturbance" means a mental, behavioral, or emotional disorder of sufficient duration to result in functional impairment that substantially interferes with or limits a person's role or ability to function in family, school, or community activities.

Amended by 85th Leg., September 1, 2017

SUBCHAPTER B: REPORT OF ABUSE OR NEGLECT; IMMUNITIES

SECTION 261.101

Persons Required to Report; Time to Report

A person having cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been adversely affected by abuse or neglect by any person shall immediately make a report as provided by this subchapter.

- A. If a professional has cause to believe that a child has been abused or neglected or may be abused or neglected, or that a child is a victim of an offense under Section 21.11, Penal Code, and the professional has cause to believe that the child has been abused as defined by Section 261.001, the professional shall make a report not later than the 48th hour after the hour the professional first suspects that the child has been or may be abused or neglected or is a victim of an offense under Section 21.11, Penal Code. A professional may not delegate to or rely on another person to make the report. In this subsection, "professional" means an individual who is licensed or certified by the state or who is an employee of a facility licensed, certified, or operated by the state and who, in the normal course of official duties or duties for which a license or certification is required, has direct contact with children. The term includes teachers, nurses, doctors, day-care employees, employees of a clinic or health care facility that provides reproductive services, juvenile probation officers, and juvenile detention or correctional officers.

In addition to the duty to make a report under Subsection (a) or (b), a person or professional shall make a report in the manner required by Subsection (a) or (b), as applicable, if the person or professional has cause to believe that an adult was a victim of abuse or neglect as a child and the person or professional determines in good faith that disclosure of the information is necessary to protect the health and safety of:

- 1. another child or
 - 2. an elderly person or person with a disability as defined by Section 48.002, Human Resources Code.
- B. The requirement to report under this section applies without exception to an individual whose personal communications may otherwise be privileged, including an attorney, a member of the clergy, a medical practitioner, a social worker, a mental health professional, an employee or member of a board that licenses or certifies a professional, and an employee of a clinic or health care facility that provides reproductive services.

- C. Unless waived in writing by the person making the report, the identity of an individual making a report under this chapter is confidential and may be disclosed only:
1. as provided in Section 261.201; or
 2. to a law enforcement officer for the purposes of conducting a criminal investigation of the report.

SECTION 261.102

Matters to be Reported

A report should reflect the reporter's belief that a child has been or may be abused or neglected or has died of abuse or neglect.

SECTION 261.103

Report Made to Appropriate Agency

- A. Except as provided by Subsections (b) and (c) and Section 261.405, a report shall be made to:
 1. any local or state law enforcement agency;
 2. the department
 3. the state agency that operates, licenses, certificates, or registers the facility in which the alleged abuse or neglect occurred.
- B. A report may be made to the Texas Juvenile Justice Department instead of the entities listed under Subsection (A) if the report is based on information provided by a child while under the supervision of the Texas Juvenile Justice Department concerning the child's alleged abuse of another child.
- C. Notwithstanding Subsection (A), a report, other than a report under Subsection (A)(3) or Section 261.405, must be made to the department if the alleged or suspected abuse or neglect involves a person responsible for the care, custody, or welfare of the child.

SECTION 261.104

Contents of Report

The person making a report shall identify, if known:

1. The name and address of the child;
2. The name and address of the person responsible for the care, custody, or welfare of the child; and
3. Any other pertinent information concerning the alleged or suspected abuse or neglect.

SECTION 261.105

Referral of Report by Department or Law Enforcement

- A. All reports received by a local or state law enforcement agency that allege abuse or neglect by a person responsible for a child's care, custody, or welfare shall be referred immediately to the department.
- B. The department shall immediately notify the appropriate state or local law enforcement agency of any report it receives, other than a report from a law enforcement agency, which concerns the suspected abuse or neglect of a child or death of a child from abuse or neglect.
- C. In addition to notifying a law enforcement agency, if the report relates to a child in a facility operated, licensed, certified, or registered by a state agency, the department shall refer the report to the agency for investigation.

Notwithstanding Subsections (B) and (C), if a report under this section relates to a child with an intellectual disability receiving services in a state supported living center as defined by Section 531.002, Health and Safety Code, or the ICF-IID component of the Rio Grande State Center, the department shall proceed with the investigation of the report as provided by Section 261.404.
- D. If the department initiates an investigation and determines that the abuse or neglect does not involve a person responsible for the child's care, custody, or welfare, the department shall refer the report to a law enforcement agency for further investigation. If the department determines that the abuse or neglect involves an employee of a public elementary or secondary school, and that the child is a student at the school, the department shall orally notify the superintendent of the school district in which the employee is employed about the investigation.
- E. In cooperation with the department, the Texas Juvenile Justice Department by rule shall adopt guidelines for identifying a report made to the Texas Juvenile Justice Department under Section 261.103(B) that is appropriate to refer to the department or a law enforcement agency for investigation. Guidelines adopted under this subsection must require the Texas Juvenile Justice Department to consider the severity and immediacy of the alleged abuse or neglect of the child victim.

Immunities

- A. A person acting in good faith who reports or assists in the investigation of a report of alleged child abuse or neglect or who testifies or otherwise participates in a judicial proceeding arising from a report, petition, or investigation of alleged child abuse or neglect is immune from civil or criminal liability that might otherwise be incurred or imposed.
- B. Immunity from civil and criminal liability extends to an authorized volunteer of the department or a law enforcement officer who participates at the request of the department in an investigation of alleged or suspected abuse or neglect or in an action arising from an investigation if the person was acting in good faith and in the scope of the person's responsibilities.
- C. A person who reports the person's own abuse or neglect of a child or who acts in bad faith or with malicious purpose in reporting alleged child abuse or neglect is not immune from civil or criminal liability.

Failure to Report; Penalty

- A. A person commits an offense if the person is required to make a report under Section 261.101(A) and knowingly fails to make a report as provided in this chapter.
A person who is a professional as defined by Section 261.101(B) commits an offense if the person is required to make a report under Section 261.101(B) and knowingly fails to make a report as provided in this chapter.
- B. An offense under Subsection (A) is a Class A misdemeanor, except that the offense is a state jail felony if it is shown on the trial of the offense that the child was a person with an intellectual disability who resided in a state supported living center, the ICF-IID component of the Rio Grande State Center, or a facility licensed under Chapter 252, Health and Safety Code, and the actor knew that the child had suffered serious bodily injury as a result of the abuse or neglect.
- C. An offense under Subsection (A-1) is a Class A misdemeanor, except that the offense is a state jail felony if it is shown on the trial of the offense that the actor intended to conceal the abuse or neglect.

RESPONDING AND BARRIERS TO REPORTING

APPENDIX D

How and to whom to report policy or boundary violations or suspected child abuse can be found in Section VIII, of the *Handbook for Those Who Work with Children and Youth* and in Appendix C.

Barriers to reporting – what prevents individuals from reporting cases of abuse?

1. Denial – We don't want to believe that abuse occurs
2. Loyalty – We have an allegiance to the alleged perpetrator or the organization
3. Fear – We could be wrong, or we may not want to be identified.
4. Protection – We want to protect the victim from embarrassment or pain
5. Avoidance – We don't want to get caught in the middle
6. Guilt – We should have known or we might be implicated

How to respond when a child reports abuse...

1. Put your own feelings aside trying not to communicate shock, disgust, embarrassment, or disbelief. Be calm and supportive.
2. Never agree to a child who asks, "if I tell you, promise you won't tell anyone?"
3. Assure the child that he/she did the right thing by telling and that you believe him/her.
4. Try not to lead the victim even if he/she has difficulty in the telling or is non-verbal. Let her/ him tell his/ her own story, in his/ her own words as much as possible.
5. Never blame the victim or make judgments about what happened.
6. Try not to say things that might make the victim feel guilty or inadequate ("why didn't you say no?").
7. Try not to speak badly of the abuser. Remember, this could be the child's parent whom he/ she nonetheless loves.
8. Remember, it is not up to you to investigate or elaborate on the child's story. You need only have *suspicion* to report.
9. Report the abuse to the person in your protocol. If you feel the child is in immediate danger, be sure to share the concern.
10. These concerns may also need to be reported to CPS. Again, if you feel the child is in immediate danger, be sure to share those concerns.
11. The child's report should be discussed only with authorized people and not with other children or uninvolved adults. It is important to tell only people who are required to know. The child has a right to confidentiality.
12. Recognize that this process may cause conflicted feelings in you. Be aware that you also may need to process your feelings. Be careful that who you choose to do this with maintains the child's confidentiality and yours.

A “RESPONSIBLE PERSON” FOR CHILDREN AND / OR YOUTH EVENTS

APPENDIX E

This guide to the role of “Responsible Person” in the Safeguarding policies is not intended as a substitute for the policies. References to relevant sections in the SGC policies are provided for your convenience.

1. A Responsible Person (RP) is appointed by a program Supervisor to be accountable for compliance with the SGC policies for an event or program. Sections I.C and III.C.
2. An RP must be trained and screened in SGC and be physically present during the event. (Different individuals may be designated the Responsible Person for different events in the same program.) Section I.C.
3. For events involving Travel, an RP must be at least 25 years old. Section V.C.1.
4. Special Responsibilities of the RP during an event include:
 - a) Administers all prescription and over the counter medications to minors, or designate another adult to do so, unless the parents and Responsible Person have already agreed the minor may self-administer (recommended exceptions include inhalers and epi-pen).
Section II.D.2.
 - b) In the case of travel, is responsible for all aspects of trip including carrying all documentation and cash and/ or credit card capacity to address emergencies (see complete list in Section V.C.1).
 - c) In the case of a hotel stay, assigns the rooms and room occupants (recommended, not required). Section V.E.4.
5. The RP is someone participants or others can go to in order to make a report of suspected abuse or neglect or the observation of inappropriate behaviors. Be sure to communicate this fact to parents and participants of a program or event. Section VII.A.2 and B.1.
6. If the RP receives a report of suspected abuse or neglect that has taken place in a facility or organization associated with the Diocese, the RP must immediately inform the head of the organization, unless the head is the subject of the complaint, in which case the RP must directly inform the Diocesan Office. Of course, the RP is also Mandated Reporter, who is obligated to report any suspected abuse or neglect to the TDFPS. See Section VIII.A.1 and 2.
7. If the RP receives a report of inappropriate behaviors, the RP shall immediately report the same to the head of organization. If the inappropriate behaviors or policy violations continue, a report must also be made to the Diocesan Office. Section VII.B.1

ADULT-TO-CHILD RATIOS

APPENDIX F

The presence of two unrelated adults is required at all times for any church program or activity for children or youth.*

In addition to this requirement, the following adult-to-child ratios must be maintained:

Age	At All Times	Adult Ratio	Child Ratio
Infants (ages 0-1)	2 unrelated adults	1 Adult	3 Infants
Toddlers (ages 1-2)	2 unrelated adults	1 Adult	6 toddlers
Child age 2 - 8 th Grade	2 unrelated adults	1 Adult	8 children
9 th - 12 th Grade	2 unrelated adults	1 Adult	12 youth

*Diocesan schools accredited or licensed observe adult-to-child ratios as established by the licensing or accrediting agencies.

PERMISSION FORM FOR CHILDREN OR YOUTH PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES

APPENDIX G

Participant's Name: _____

Preferred Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Age: _____

Grade: _____

Male

Female

Prefer not to share

Church Name: _____

City: _____

Participant's Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____

Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Emergency Contact

Parent(s) / Guardian(s)

Phone

If unavailable, please call

Phone

Medical

Allergies (including allergies to medication)

Are there any over-the-counter medications (Tylenol, Advil, etc.) which participant should not receive if any minor symptoms develop?

Medications sent with the participant

Note: Prescribed medications must be in original pharmacy container with the correct name, date, instructions, and physician's name on the label. The event nurse, if applicable, will keep and distribute all medications during the event.

Please notify the event coordinator or nurse if this participant has been exposed to any communicable disease within the three weeks prior to this event. Participants will NOT be allowed to attend if they arrive at the event ill.

Insurance Information

Insurance Company: _____

Phone: _____

Policy #: _____

Group #: _____

EMPLOYEE APPLICATION FORM

PAID PERSONNEL

APPENDIX H (a)

Please complete all of the questions accurately. Attach additional sheets, if needed.

Today's Date: _____ Position applying for: _____

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

How long have you lived at this address: _____

Driver License #: _____ Driver License State: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Are you legally eligible to work in this country? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Note: If you are selected for a paid position, you will be required to show documents verifying your employment eligibility and identify completing the Form I-9.

List all countries and states where you have lived in the past ten (10) years:

What interests you about the position in which you are applying?

What has prepared you for the position in which you are applying?

Employment History

Please complete the information for your current or most recent employer:

Dates of Employment: Started:		Ended:	
Position Held:		Company:	
Company Address:			
Immediate Supervisor Name:		Phone:	
May we contact your supervisor?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If no, when can we reach out to them?			

Previous Employment History

Please complete the information for your previous employer for the past 10 years:

Dates of Employment: Started:		Ended:
Position Held:	Company:	
Company Address:		
Immediate Supervisor Name:		Phone:
Reason for Leaving:		

Previous Employment History

Please complete the information for your previous employer for the past 10 years:

Dates of Employment: Started:		Ended:
Position Held:	Company:	
Company Address:		
Immediate Supervisor Name:		Phone:
Reason for Leaving:		

Previous Employment History

Please complete the information for your previous employer for the past 10 years:

Dates of Employment: Started:		Ended:
Position Held:	Company:	
Company Address:		
Immediate Supervisor Name:		Phone:
Reason for Leaving:		

Volunteer Experience

Organization:	Dates:
How volunteered?	
Organization:	Dates:
How volunteered?	
Organization:	Dates:
How volunteered?	

Education

School	Address	Graduated Yes / No	Degree / Certificate:

References

Please provide three (3) references who can be contacted; who are not related to you.

Name:	Email:
Address:	
Phone:	How long have you known this person?
How does this person know you?	

Name:	Email:
Address:	
Phone:	How long have you known this person?
How does this person know you?	

Name:	Email:
Address:	
Phone:	How long have you known this person?
How does this person know you?	

Have you ever been convicted of/plead guilty to/no contest to a crime other than a minor traffic violation? If yes, explain.

Have you ever been accused of physically/sexually/emotionally abusing a child/adult? If yes, explain.

I confirm that all of my information is accurate and complete.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

CODE OF CONDUCT

PAID PERSONNEL

APPENDIX H (b)

Read and initial each item to signify your agreement to comply with the statement.

_____ I will not physically, sexually, or emotionally abuse or neglect a child or youth.

_____ I will do my best to prevent abuse and neglect among the children and youth involved in the activities and services of the congregations, schools, and organizations of the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas

_____ I will comply in spirit and in action with the policies in the *Handbook for Those Who Work with Children and Youth*.

_____ I will immediately report my observations of inappropriate behaviors or boundary violations as outlined in these policies.

_____ I will report immediately known or suspected abuse to state and Diocesan authorities.

_____ I will immediately seek advice from the Safeguarding Office if I have any questions or concerns about these policies or the expectations.

I confirm my understanding and the expectations.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND RELEASE

PAID PERSONNEL

APPENDIX H (c)

To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this application is complete and accurate. I understand that providing false information is grounds for not hiring me or for my discharge if I have already been hired.

I acknowledge that I have received and reviewed a copy of the *Handbook for Those Who Work with Children and Youth*.

I authorize any person or organization, whether or not identified in this application, to provide any information concerning my previous employment, education, credit history, driving record, criminal conviction record, sexual offender registry or other qualifications for my employment. I also authorize the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas and _____ (congregation, school, agency) to request and receive such information.

If hired, I agree to be bound by the Diocese of West Texas policies and procedures, including but not limited to *The Handbook for Those Who Work with Children and Youth* and such policies as may be required by _____.
(congregation, school, agency)

I also understand that my employment may be terminated, or any offer or acceptance of employment withdrawn, at any time, with or without cause, and with or without prior notice at the option of _____ (congregation, school, agency), the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas, or myself.

Nothing contained in this application or in any pre-employment communication is intended to, or does, create a contract between myself and the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas or _____ (congregation, school, agency) for either employment or any other benefit.

I have read and understand this acknowledgement and release.

Signature

Date

Print Name

VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FORM

APPENDIX I (a)

Please complete all of the questions accurately. Attach additional sheets, if needed.

Today's Date: _____ Position applying for: _____

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

How long have you lived at this address: _____

Driver License #: _____ Driver License State: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

List all countries and states where you have lived in the past ten (10) years:

What ministry or ministries will you be involved?

What interests you about this ministry or ministries?

What has prepared you for this ministry or ministries?

Volunteer Experience

Organization: _____		Dates: _____
How volunteered? _____		
Contact person: _____	Phone: _____	
Organization: _____		Dates: _____
How volunteered? _____		
Contact person: _____	Phone: _____	
Organization: _____		Dates: _____
How volunteered? _____		
Contact person: _____	Phone: _____	

References

Please provide three (3) references who can be contacted; who are not related to you.

Name:	Email:
Address:	
Phone:	How long have you known this person?
How does this person know you?	

Name:	Email:
Address:	
Phone:	How long have you known this person?
How does this person know you?	

Name:	Email:
Address:	
Phone:	How long have you known this person?
How does this person know you?	

Have you ever been convicted of/plead guilty to/no contest to a crime other than a minor traffic violation? If yes, explain.

Have you ever been accused of physically/sexually/emotionally abusing a child/adult? If yes, explain.

I confirm that all of my information is accurate and complete.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

CODE OF CONDUCT

VOLUNTEER

APPENDIX I (b)

Read and initial each item to signify your agreement to comply with the statement.

_____ I will not physically, sexually, or emotionally abuse or neglect a child or youth.

_____ I will do my best to prevent abuse and neglect among the children and youth involved in the activities and services of the congregations, schools, and organizations of the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas

_____ I will comply in spirit and in action with the policies in the *Handbook for Those Who Work with Children and Youth*.

_____ I will immediately report my observations of inappropriate behaviors or boundary violations as outlined in these policies.

_____ I will report immediately known or suspected abuse to state and Diocesan authorities.

_____ I will immediately seek advice from the Safeguarding Office if I have any questions or concerns about these policies or the expectations.

I confirm my understanding and the expectations.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND RELEASE

VOLUNTEER

APPENDIX I (c)

To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this application is complete and accurate. I understand that providing false information is grounds for not hiring me or for my discharge if I have already been hired.

I acknowledge that I have received and reviewed a copy of the *Handbook for Those Who Work with Children and Youth*.

I authorize any person or organization, whether or not identified in this application, to provide any information concerning my previous employment, education, credit history, driving record, criminal conviction record, sexual offender registry or other qualifications for my employment. I also authorize the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas and _____ (congregation, school, agency) to request and receive such information.

If hired, I agree to be bound by the Diocese of West Texas policies and procedures, including but not limited to *The Handbook for Those Who Work with Children and Youth* and such policies as may be required by _____.
(congregation, school, agency)

I also understand that my employment may be terminated, or any offer or acceptance of employment withdrawn, at any time, with or without cause, and with or without prior notice at the option of _____ (congregation, school, agency), the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas, or myself.

Nothing contained in this application or in any pre-employment communication is intended to, or does, create a contract between myself and the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas or _____ (congregation, school, agency) for either employment or any other benefit.

I have read and understand this acknowledgement and release.

Signature

Date

Print Name



Appendix J

Protocols for Safeguarding Children and Teens in Online Programming

As numerous organizations temporarily move their programming online in response to the Coronavirus, several have reached out inquiring as to what measures should be implemented to safeguard children from maltreatment in these virtual settings. Taking time to consider what, if any, new risks are introduced when programming or daily operations change, is a smart move. Below we share some factors to consider and suggested protocols for mitigating risk in online communications and programming.

As a general rule for youth-serving organizations, interactions between adults and children should be observable and interruptible. In person, this is best accomplished by two-deep leadership (more than one adult is present) or by utilizing open layouts, glass walls, windows in doors, and inviting other adults to drop by when two-deep leadership is not possible. The same principle applies to virtual communications as well.

Two-Deep Leadership

Two-deep leadership in virtual communications with children and teens means that texts, emails, WhatsApp messages, and other social media communications should copy another adult (e.g., administrator or parent). It also means that two staff members are present for video meetings, or in the case of private tutoring, a parent is present. The great thing about online meetings, is that it is actually more convenient to introduce two-deep leadership to the program without adding significant inconvenience to the second adult. In the case of a class meeting, administrators can open the virtual meeting in a small window from their remote office. In the case of b'nei mitzvah lessons, parents can set up a laptop in the kitchen, dining room, or other living space.

When having two adults in the virtual program or class is not practical, ensure that the interaction is observable and interruptible, much as you would for in-person interactions. To this end, consider how you schedule, communicate and document.

Scheduling

Schedule online events on a shared or public calendar that includes a link to the meeting so that other adults know where you will be and when you will be there, and have the option to drop in. Ideally the calendar should be shared with staff, parents, and children, a practice that should be possible for schools moving regularly scheduled classes online. This becomes harder for tutoring or mentoring sessions, such as when a synagogue schedules b'nei mitzvah lessons, and in these situations sharing the calendar events with parents and other administrators/colleagues is sufficient. In all cases, adults should not spontaneously call, text, or communicate via social media

with children, without planning the meeting in advance in accordance with the guidelines stated here.

Communication Channels

Class meetings, online programs, and private tutoring sessions should be scheduled and held on professional, rather than personal accounts. This means emailing only from organizational emails and hosting video meetings via the organization's video conferencing account. If your organization doesn't have professional emails or video conferencing technology, consider investing in some; the change does not have to be costly, and may even be free. Whenever possible, this rule should apply to social media as well: staff who plan to communicate with children on social media should have a professional social media account that is separate from their personal one. In addition, communications on social media should occur in official groups (e.g., Facebook group or WhatsApp group chat) that are monitored by administrators and closed to the public.

Documentation

Online communications should be documented (much the same way in-person attendance is taken), including the date, start time, end time, agenda, names of participating adults and names of participating children. Recording video meetings increases their observability, but only retroactively. Even so, recording may be a useful safeguarding tool for organizations with limited supervisory capacity, in that supervisors can make known that they will review (or "spot check") a subset of the recordings, or a specific recording if concerns emerge.

Whatever protocols you choose to implement now, consider how you might formalize them into an official policy for all online communications, not just while regular programming has been interrupted. Finally, whether protocol or official policy, the safeguards you choose can only be effective if they are widely communicated, understood, and enforced.

A project of



Appendix K

Safeguarding “Training Only” Agreement

Dear _____ (Vendor / Organization Representative),

Churches and schools in the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas are invited to complete Safeguarding certification *for your employees* by using the “**Training Only**” option. Under the “Training Only” option, employees are trained in the Diocesan Safeguarding policies. Please review the following information before submitting the attached form.

Safeguarding “Training Only” option for Vendors and Organizations

Because churches and schools in the Diocese of West Texas have requirements for hiring and screening employees, any vendor / organization employees who are working with or in the vicinity of children are also required to have the same requirements and maintain Safeguarding certification screening records for employees.

You must have the following information on all of your employees / representatives:

Interview (face to face)

Application containing current contact information and employment history

References from at least two people with positive responses to the screening questions

Background Check including a nationwide criminal and sex offender data base check

Vendor / Organization must maintain employee personnel files (including all the above information) that can be made available to the Diocesan entity upon request.

Certification Requirements using “Training Only”

All employees / representatives of your organization working with or around children and teens at our Diocesan entities must complete *Safeguarding God’s Children* (SGC) certification within 30 days of being on the property.

Every five years, the employee / representative must update background check and complete SGC certification again.

We appreciate your help in ensuring God’s children are safe.

Diocesan Entity Representative

Diocesan Entity Name

Safeguarding “Training Only” Agreement

Name of Vendor / Organization _____ City _____

I affirm that the screening practices for employees / representatives are equal to or exceed those required in Diocesan *Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth*.

Our screening practices include: (initial to confirm)

- _____ Personal Interview
- _____ Application containing current contact information and employment history
- _____ Reference Checks from at least two people with positive responses to the screening questions
- _____ Background Checks from a nationwide criminal and sex offender data base and renewed, at minimum, every five years.

We renew our background checks every _____ year(s).

Our organization will use the “Training Only” option for our employees / representatives to completing *Safeguarding God’s Children* training within 30 days of this agreement.

- _____ All employees / representatives who will be working with the Diocesan entity around children will be trained in Safeguarding God’s Children.
- _____ A copy of an employee’s personnel file (including all the above information) will be provided to the Diocesan entity, if requested.
- _____ All employees / representatives who will be working with the Diocesan entity around children will be trained on the Diocesan Safeguarding God’s Children Handbook and Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth

Vendor / Organization (signature) _____ Date _____

For Diocesan Entity Use

Name of person _____ Certification Date _____

Name of person _____ Certification Date _____

Name of person _____ Certification Date _____

Name of person _____ Certification Date _____

Name of person _____ Certification Date _____

Name of person _____ Certification Date _____

Name of person _____ Certification Date _____

BACKGROUND SCREENING INSTRUCTIONS

APPENDIX L

ON-LINE INSTRUCTIONS TO COME.

DWTX ONLINE SAFEGUARDING GOD'S CHILDREN TRAINING PROTOCOL

APPENDIX M

For all new Safeguarding God's Children trainings, the main content will be taught through online modules, followed by a 1 hour Zoom training over the updated *Diocesan Handbook for Those Who Work with Children and Youth*.

Participants will sign up for a training through the Diocesan calendar, at dwtx.org/events, indicating the church or organization they will be training to serve.

The Diocesan Safeguarding Administrator will register them for the online training. They will then send participants a link to the online training with deadlines for completion, date and link for the Zoom meeting, and links to any necessary paperwork/forms. The participants must complete the online modules and take the tests before the Zoom meeting.

After completing the online modules and attending the Zoom review of the handbook, a Safeguarding God's Children certificate will be sent to the participant / organization.

Required Online Modules for training: each video and quiz require approximately 30-45 minutes.

All participants MUST take the following:

- Meet Sam
- It Happened to Me

Plus a minimum of ONE additional Module:

- Keeping Your Church Safe
- Keeping Your School Safe
- Keeping Your Camp Safe

For Schools, Youth groups, Happening, Camps; the following are required:

- Preventing Bullying
- Social Media Safety

TIPS FOR INTERVIEWS

APPENDIX N

A face-to-face interview allows you to learn more about the applicant and to inform the applicant more about the position. You can also communicate what your church expects of its employees and volunteers and what it does to keep children safe.

Use the interview to verify information on the application and to discuss each of the applicant's work and volunteer experiences. Explore anything that looks out of the ordinary, such as frequent changes in employment or residence, accepting a position at a substantially lower salary, or disparities between what's on the application and what the applicant or references report.

It's always a good idea to have more than one person interview an applicant. That way, you'll have a second opinion and someone with whom to share your perceptions. One interview may notice something about the applicant or think to ask an important question that another interview overlooks.

Many experts believe that the best predictor of someone's future behavior is their past behavior. That's why asking applicants to describe how they handled specific situation in the past can tell you how they may handle similar situations in the future. This type of questioning is called "behavioral interviewing."

"Tell me about a work situation where you were stressed out. How did you manage your stress?"

You'll want to use behavioral interviewing to determine how responsible the applicant has been in other work with children, how the applicant responded when he or she did not agree with or understand a policy, and how the applicant demonstrated good judgment when asked to make decisions.

1. Tell me why you are interested in this position
2. With what group of children would you prefer to work? Why?
3. Tell me about some of your hobbies or volunteer work?
4. Tell me about a time in your life when you had to quickly learn how to do something. What did you have to learn? How did you learn it? Did you use the new information?
5. Often in school or work, we are expected to adhere to policies that don't really make sense to us. Tell me about a time when you had to stick to a rule, even though it didn't seem reasonable. How did you handle that situation?
6. Give me an example of a time when a child really tried your patience. Specifically, tell me what happened. How did you respond to that situation?
7. Describe the two most frustrating child situations you have ever had to deal with and how you handled them.
8. Have you ever abused or molested a child? Have you ever been accused of abusing or molesting a child?
9. Describe a time when you were personally supportive and reassuring to a child who needed a friend. How did you know the child was in need? How did you show your support?
10. Tell me about a time when someone commended you for your good judgment and common sense. What was the situation and how did you handle it?

TIPS FOR SPEAKING TO REFERENCES

APPENDIX O

Use behavioral interviewing to determine how the applicant interacted with children, followed policies, managed frustration, and established age-appropriate boundaries.

- A. Begin by telling the reference that they applicant has applied for a position working with children, what the position is, and how much supervision the applicant will receive on the job.
- B. Make certain the reference has known the applicant long enough and well enough to provide information that will be useful to you.
- C. Ask if anyone has ever complained about the applicant's interactions with children.
- D. Ask if the applicant holds any other jobs or does any other volunteer work with children.
- E. Finally, invite the reference to share any other information they'd like to about the applicant


Write down as much as you can while you are conversing with the reference, and fill in your notes immediately after your contact. That way, you'll be able to refer to your notes to help you make a final decision about the person's suitability to work with minors.


REQUIRED CHECKLIST FOR EMPLOYEES / VOLUNTEERS

APPENDIX P

The following items are to be confirmed / kept in the Employee / Volunteer folder:

Name of Employee / Volunteer: _____

	Items in File	Date	Name of Person Completed
	Application		
	Code of Conduct		
	Acknowledgement and Release		
	Background Screening (need every 5 years)		
	Safeguarding God's Children Certification (need every 5 years)		

	Action has been completed	Date	Name of Person Completed
	Interview		
	Reference Checks		