

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Framingham
Safe Church Policies
January 2014

A. Introduction:

The aim of this policy is to make our Church a safe place for the children of God. We believe that this policy is mandated by our Baptismal covenant to respect the dignity of every human being. These parish policies will be promulgated widely including:

- Posted in areas where activities for children and youth take place.
- Use within annual educational campaign.
- Posting on the parish Safe Church Bulletin Board and parish web site.
- Provision to volunteers who work regularly with children and youth ("regular volunteers") and persons engaged in ministries of pastoral visitation ("pastoral visitors").
- Distribution to all employees.

B. Screening for Paid Employment:

All employees will submit a written application, undergo an interview, and provide references.

The Diocese of Massachusetts performs extensive background checks on all clergy who are deployed or licensed to officiate within the Diocese. The Diocese also performs background checks on any diocesan employees or volunteers who regularly work with children or youth at the diocesan level.

C. Screening for Volunteer Ministry with the Vulnerable:

St. Andrew's screens those who work with children and youth and those who visit persons alone for pastoral reasons. A "regular volunteer" is deemed to be any person who has a recurring role in any such ministry. (Persons who engage in any overnight chaperonage of children or youth are also deemed "regular volunteers.")

Regular volunteers must be known to the clergy for at least six months. Regular volunteers are expected (in the discretion of the Rector) to be sufficiently active in parish life, beyond their volunteer role, to demonstrate a commitment to the congregation.

St. Andrew's conducts a criminal records check (CORI) on all employees and all regular volunteers for children and youth every five years. All applicants will be automatically disqualified from volunteer ministry or employment should the criminal record check show criminal conviction for: a sexual offense or physical abuse involving a minor; incest; rape; assault; murder; kidnapping; or child pornography. Other convictions or legal offenses may also result in disqualification at the discretion of the Rector. The rector retains sole discretion to admit persons to ministry roles at St. Andrew's.

D. Behavioral Standards for Ministry with Children and Youth:

St. Andrew's requires that adults who work with children and youth shall not:

1. Provide children or youth with alcohol, illegal drugs or pornography;
2. Consume alcohol or illegal drugs, or misuse legal drugs, at any children's or youth event;
3. Be under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs or misused legal drugs at any children's or youth event;
4. Engage in illegal behavior or permit other adults, children or youth to engage in illegal behavior;
5. Engage in any sexual, romantic, or secretive conduct with any child or youth; or discuss their own sexual activities or fantasies;
6. Carry firearms or weapons at any activity with children or youth;

E. Appropriate Monitoring for Ministry with Children and Youth:

St. Andrew's follows these precautions to protect our children and youth:

1. We practice "two-deep leadership." At all events or meetings involving children and youth there shall be at least two unrelated adults present. If unanticipated or emergency circumstances result in an adult being alone with children or youth, the period of time shall be kept as brief as possible and the adult shall immediately inform the Director of Religious Education (the DRE), the Rector or the Senior Warden of the occurrence. During church school or youth program hours, classes may have only one teacher so long as visual contact may be maintained with the teacher (i.e., doors remain open or doors have windows.)
2. No event for children or youth shall take place in a private residence without prior notification of the DRE and rector, or in the case of the DRE or rector's homes, without prior vestry notification. Adults who work with children or youth may not have private meetings with any unrelated child or youth away from sanctioned church activities. All meetings must take place with parental consent and in the visual presence of another unrelated adult. Date-specific written permission must be obtained for participation in any church-sponsored event.
3. Any new programs or trips that involve children or youth must be given prior approval by the Rector and the Vestry.
4. All participants in children's and youth programs must abide by St. Andrew's Norms for Youth Events (See attached: Appendix A). Adults who work with children or youth may not transport children or youth alone and must abide by St. Andrew's Transportation Policy for Children and Youth (See attached: Appendix B). Such adults must also refrain from any internet conduct in violation of our Parish Guidelines for Social Media (See attached: Appendix C).

F. Parent or Guardian Responsibilities to Maintain Safety:

St. Andrew's needs parents and guardians to assist us in maintaining safety for all. Careful compliance with the following policies will assist us to prevent accident, injury and abuse:

1. Parents or guardians should inform St. Andrew's Church of all allergies, medical conditions, or special needs that your child may have.
2. Medications will not be administered to minors without written parental consent. Parents must inform the supervising staff if children or youth are expected to consume medication at church activities.
3. Sign in your child for nursery care and leave written instructions regarding any special needs. The child will only be released to the person(s) who signed in the child or other person.
4. Parents should supervise children while they are on church premises. Children and youth may not roam the building before, during, or after church services or activities.
5. Parents should assist staff and volunteers in working to control problem behaviors. Please attempt to preserve the authority of staff and volunteers in front of your child. It is in your child's interest to maintain the relationship, if you intend to continue participation in our activities; it is also a kindness to our volunteers.
6. Written consent and medical forms from parent or guardian will be required for participation in any off-site activity. Please do not drop off your child without providing such written consent.

G. Training for the Protection of the Vulnerable:

St. Andrew's requires all clergy, employees, regular volunteers in ministry to children and youth, and all pastoral visitors to complete diocesan Safe Church Training every five years. The parish will maintain a record of those who have completed the training.

H. Responding to Concerns about Violations of These Ministry Standards:

Persons with a reasonable degree of suspicion that these standards have been violated by a volunteer or parish staff member shall immediately report the violation to the Rector and Senior Warden. The rector will ensure that appropriate remedial or disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or volunteer ministry, or notification of proper authorities, takes place. The Rector is also responsible for ensuring that appropriate pastoral care is provided to all those affected. **(Consult the printed parish directory or website @ www.standrewsframma.org to contact the Senior Warden or the Rector.)**

Persons with a reasonable degree of suspicion that these policies have been violated by a clergy person shall immediately report the violation to the Bishop's office. The Bishop is responsible for providing appropriate pastoral care to all those affected and appropriate remedial and/or disciplinary action, up to and including canonical disciplinary action. **(Access to the bishop may be obtained by accessing contact information at www.diomass.org.)**

Paid parish employees are “mandated reporters,” under the laws of the state of Massachusetts. Any mandated reporter who has reason to suspect that child abuse has taken place shall report it to the appropriate civil authority. Any other person with reasonable cause to believe abuse has taken place may do so. In Massachusetts, the appropriate civil authority is the **Department of Social Services in Framingham: (508)424-0100.**

I. Policies and Procedures Regarding Sexual Harassment and Misconduct

Current Employee Sexual Harassment Policy - Sexual harassment is prohibited by both Federal and State laws. The Massachusetts statute, which is similar to the Federal law, defines sexual harassment as follows:

The term “sexual harassment” shall mean sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when submission to or rejection of such advances, requests or conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment or as a basis for employment decision; or (b) such advances, requests or conduct have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or sexually offensive work environment. Discrimination on the basis of sex shall include, but not be limited to, sexual harassment.

Sexual misconduct as defined above, by any ordained person, aspirant, postulant, or seminarian sponsored by or working in this parish, or by any lay employee or volunteer serving in any capacity, is strictly prohibited.

Clergy Sexual Misconduct Procedures - Any allegation of sexual misconduct brought against an ordained person is a matter of serious magnitude and must be reported immediately to the Bishop. The process for handling and disposing of such clerical sexual misconduct complaints will be evaluated, investigated, and resolved in accordance with the Episcopal Process in accordance with Diocesan policy and canon law.

Sexual Misconduct of a Layperson - All complaints of sexual misconduct by a member of the laity exercising a ministry or having a pastoral relationship within this parish should be reported immediately to the Rector, and ultimately to the Bishop.

J. Policies Regarding Adult Lay Ministries of Pastoral Visitation:

Pastoral visits may be done by laypeople within St. Andrew’s ministries, as in the case of delivering communion or attending shut-ins. Adult lay ministers engaged in such tasks shall make every effort to adhere to an open door policy, with due consideration for the privacy of the person being visited. All persons engaging in pastoral visitation ministries must complete Safe Church Training as described above.

Adults exercising ministries of visitation in a private setting on behalf of the parish should document such visits and include the person(s) visited, and the date, time, a reason for, and length of the visit. Such documentation for all visits shall be logged in the Register of Church Services, in the black pastoral visitor's binder in the robing room, or in the Parish Healthcare Ministries logbook in the Parish Office.

Brief visits to deliver holiday flowers or the customary gifts of food to newcomers do not require Safe Church Training, but in the event the delivery person is invited into the home, an open door policy should be observed.

Any signs or evidence of abuse or neglect against the elderly should be reported to the **Elder Abuse Hotline (800) 992-2275**. Signs or evidence of neglect or abuse against a disabled person should be reported to the **Disabled Persons Protection Commission at (800) 426-9009**.

K. Commitment to Healing:

St. Andrew's is a community committed to helping heal all who have been affected by abuse, and has resources available to assist such persons in their spiritual journey.

Vestry Approval and Amendment

These policies and procedures were adopted by the Vestry of St. Andrew's Framingham on January 13, 2014, and are subject to amendment by the Vestry at any time.

Signature: _____

Michael DiPalma
Secretary of the Vestry

[Safe Church Policy: Appendix A]

Norms for Youth Events at St. Andrew's, Framingham

The following norms were developed by the Diocese of Massachusetts Youth Council and Educational Ministries Office, and have been adapted for St. Andrew's use.

Adult Sponsors:

- Two-deep leadership is our norm. Rare exceptions for emergency purposes are allowed, with notice to the Director of Religious Education or Rector immediately after the exception takes place.
- All adult sponsors have read and will abide by the policies fully outlined in the Safe Church Policies of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, of which this norm sheet is Appendix A.

Behavioral Expectations for All:

1. All participants agree to meet and enforce all behavior expectations.
2. All participants agree to follow the schedule set for this event.
3. All participants agree to be available to assist and support adult sponsors.
4. All participants agree to act with respect toward one another's persons and property.

By attending this event, the participant (**youth or adult**) is indicating his/her commitment to the following **non-negotiables**:

1. No drugs, weapons, tobacco (of any kind) or alcohol is allowed.
2. No inappropriate sexual activity will take place.
3. Participants will not leave event or be alone without knowledge of adult parish sponsors.
4. Participants agree to stay in event-designated areas.

Non-compliance with these norms will result in the immediate expulsion of the participant at the discretion of the parish event leader or clergy, and a telephone call to parents for immediate transport home by parents.

[Safe Church Policy Appendix B]

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church Transportation Policy for Children and Youth

Driver Qualifications

Qualifications for Adult Drivers:

Only adults 21 years of age or older may provide transportation to St. Andrew's program participants for program-sponsored activities off the parish grounds.

Qualifications for Youth Drivers of Self/Siblings:

Youth drivers age 17-20 with at least one year of fully licensed driving experience may drive themselves and/or their siblings to program-sponsored activities off the parish grounds with written parental permission only.

Qualifications for All Drivers:

Both adult and youth drivers may not transport any children (including siblings) without a statement that they possess or maintain:

- 1) A valid driver's license and vehicle registration.
- 2) Proof of adequate insurance as required by law.
- 3) Signed acknowledgement that this Transportation Policy document has been read and understood.

This information will be confidentially maintained by the Director of Religious Education.

Information will be collected at the first instance of driving service and deemed valid by St. Andrew's for the remainder of the academic year in which it was collected. Drivers will self-report any change of insurance coverage or suspension of their driver's license to the Director of Religious Education (or decline any request to drive until updated information is provided or license is re-instated).

Safety and Avoidance of the Appearance of Impropriety

- All drivers will follow all traffic laws.
- All passengers being transported will wear seatbelts at all times. Drivers must decline to transport more passengers than can be safely restrained in their vehicle.
- Drivers will not use cell phones or mobile devices while their car is in motion.
- Drivers will maintain safe standards of passenger conduct at all times, and will report any instances of passenger conduct impinging on safety to the Director of Religious Education at the earliest opportunity for follow-up. With parental notice, the Director of Religious Education may decline to transport any child or youth deemed incapable of accommodating his/his conduct to the demands of group safety.
- No driver will transport an unrelated child or youth alone, except under emergency conditions. If emergency conditions require such transportation, the driver will inform the Director of Religious Education of the incident at the earliest opportunity.

[Safe Church Policy Appendix C]

Parish Guidelines for Use of Social Media:

General Considerations:

- Digital communication (including but not limited to e-mail, text messages, chats, blog and site posts, tweets and messages via social networking sites, etc.) is not confidential. It should be considered public communication in that it can be shared with and forwarded to others.
- Online interactions need to be as transparent as those conducted in person.
- In social media networks, “friend” can mean anyone with whom you are willing to communicate through that medium. In-person friendship can mean much more in terms of intimacy, self-disclosure, mutuality and expectations for relationship. Mindfulness of and respect for such distinctions help maintain healthy boundaries.
- Laws regarding mandated reporting of suspected abuse, neglect, harassment, bullying or exploitation of children, youth, elders and vulnerable adults apply in the online world as they do in the physical world.
- Community environment and experience can be enhanced by establishing guidelines around respectful and appropriate use of social media and electronic communication devices during worship and church meetings and activities.

Guidelines for Digital Interactions with Youth:

1. St. Andrew’s on-line youth groups (e.g., Facebook) will be closed but not hidden. These groups will have both youth and adult administrators.
2. Members of youth groups will decide whether or not their social networking site groups are open to parents of current members, and parents will be informed of the choice made.
3. St. Andrew’s clergy and youth workers who work directly with youth will use only church-sponsored digital communications groups to maintain social media contact with youth members.
4. Adult staff and volunteers will not submit “friend” requests to youth. Youth may be invited to join the group established for youth (rather than be admitted to an adult’s personal account).
5. St. Andrew’s Norms for Youth Activities will be displayed in church-sponsored online groups for youth.
6. Any inappropriate material that is not covered by Mandatory Reporting laws will be deleted from the site. Any material that is covered by Mandatory Reporting laws should be reported to the St. Andrew’s rector, documented for church records, deleted from the site, and reported as required by law.

7. Any content that details inappropriate behavior (outside of the bounds of the St. Andrew's Norms for Youth Activities) during a church-sponsored event will be addressed by adult leaders as indicated by the Norms.
8. Former adult leaders of youth groups and former youth group members who are no longer age-eligible for a program will be removed from church-sponsored online communication related to that program.
9. Clergy or youth workers will not initiate video chat with children or youth.
10. When video is distributed of services or activities on the web or via other broadcast media, signs should be posted that indicate the service will be broadcast.
11. Clergy and youth leaders should take care that the content and nature of any post that will be visible to youth may be perceived as the voice of the church or misconstrued as church policy.
12. Clergy and youth workers may contact youth via email with event information and for planning purposes.
13. Adult leaders are not responsible for internet youth pages or groups that are not sponsored by St. Andrew's Episcopal Church.
14. Minors should be identified in photos published on church sponsored sites and social networks, and only first names should be included.

Guidelines for Digital Interactions Among Adults

Adult members who seek religious or spiritual advice from clergy via digital means must understand that their communication is NOT confidential. Use of digital means to communicate nullifies confidentiality.

To help maintain appropriate boundaries, clergy and are encouraged to use privacy settings to shield both adult and youth members from viewing content that may be inappropriate if a personal account is used or clergy move to another congregation.

Participants should consider what will be shown in video communications, such as their surroundings, their clothing/state of dress, etc.