

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Framingham
Safe Church Policies
July, 2009

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 posted in areas where activities for children and youth take place and widely distributed within the parish as part of an annual educational campaign concerning child abuse. Volunteers who work regularly with children and youth ("regular volunteers"), parents of children and youth, and persons engaged in ministries of pastoral visitation ("pastoral visitors") will be provided copies annually.

B. Screening for Ministry with Children and Youth:

St. Andrew's screens those who work with children and youth. A "regular volunteer" is deemed to be any person who has a recurring role in any ministry involving children or youth, or who chaperones an overnight event.

All employees and regular volunteers will submit a written application, undergo an interview, and provide references. 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 on all employees and all regular volunteers. 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 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. 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.

D. Appropriate Monitoring for Ministry with Children and Youth:

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

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 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.)

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 off church premises.

Any new programs or trips that involve children or youth must be given prior approval by the Rector and the Vestry.

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).

E. Training for Ministry:

St. Andrew's requires all clergy, employees, regular volunteers in ministry to children and youth, and all pastoral visitors to attend diocesan Safe Church Training (or its equivalent as offered by another Episcopal diocesan, provincial or national source) every five years, and present a record of such training to the Director of Religious education. The parish maintains records of those who have attended the training.

F. 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 parish directory 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.

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.**

G. Policies and Procedures Regarding Sexual Harassment and Misconduct

1. **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.

2. **Clerical and Lay Sexual Misconduct Policy** - 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.
3. **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 canonical law.

4. **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.

H. Policies Regarding Adult Lay Ministries of Pastoral Visitation:

Every effort shall be made to adhere to an open door policy, with due consideration for the privacy of the person being visited, and the seriousness of the subject of the visitation being given priority. As noted above, all persons engaging in pastoral visitation ministries must attend Safe Church Training as described in Paragraph E on page 2 of these policies.

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.

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.

I. Vestry Approval and Amendment

These policies and procedures are adopted by the Vestry of St. Andrew's Framingham on July 19, 2009 and are subject to amendment by the Vestry at any time.

Signature: _____
Sarah Larson DiPalma
Secretary of the Vestry

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.

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 must provide the following information before transporting any children or youth (including siblings):

- 1) Evidence of valid driver's license and vehicle registration: copy of license and registration.
- 2) Verification of social security number: copy of card.
- 3) Proof of adequate insurance: copy of policy declaration page indicating minimum insurance requirement of \$100,000 per person/\$300,000 per accident bodily injury coverage.
- 4) 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. When rare conditions require such transportation, the driver will inform the Director of Religious Education of the incident at the earliest opportunity.