



*Diocese of the*  
**MID-ATLANTIC**  
Anglican Church in North America



## Policy Manual for the Protection of Children



*Diocese of the*  
**MID-ATLANTIC**  
Anglican Church in North America

August, 2013

To the Clergy, Wardens, Vestry Members and People of the Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic,

I commend to you the Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic Policy for the Protection of Children.

This thoughtful and comprehensive policy sets forth “best practices” and other requirements and standards for the protection of children in the churches and ministries of our Diocese. It is the cumulative result of the wisdom of experts in this field, as well as legal counsel and youth and children’s ministry directors.

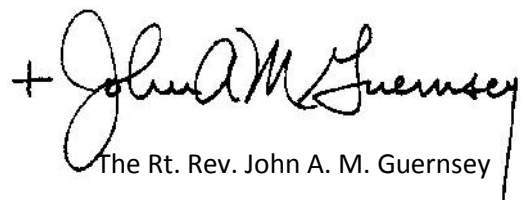
The reasons for such a policy are, unfortunately, manifold. The rates of abuse are horrific, and over 90% of juvenile sex abuse victims know their abuser in some way. Since it is impossible to identify a potential abuser by sight, the Church must intentionally provide our children with boundaries that will protect and nurture them.

Please read this policy carefully. It is vitally important that congregations, missions and mission fellowships follow its requirements and recommendations. While it is preferable that as many as possible be implemented immediately, we recognize that for some congregations it will take time, and so the implementation period will extend until the 2014 Synod of the Diocese.

Variances to specific provisions of the policy may be granted by the Bishop or the Standing Committee with the advice and counsel of the Committee on the Protection of Children and the Chancellor of the Diocese.

If you have questions, or to apply for a variance, please contact the Administrator of the Diocese at 703-590-5470.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

  
The Rt. Rev. John A. M. Guernsey

# DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

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# DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

## Biblical Foundation and Purpose

The Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic accepts with deep gratitude and seriousness the trust given us by God to nurture and care for his people, especially those who are most vulnerable and in need of protection. This is nowhere more true than when caring for our children and youth. Current statistics regarding child abuse are alarming. One in every three to four girls and one in every six to eight boys are sexually abused before age eighteen. Physical and emotional abuses continue to be serious problems in our society. The effects of such abuse can damage children at the core of who they are, and often follow them into adulthood. Abused children are children at risk. They often become adults who suffer from low self-esteem, who are unable to form and keep healthy relationships, and who struggle to maintain healthy boundaries. As the Church, we declare that we will work together to see that the proper love and care are extended to the children entrusted to us.



Jesus teaches explicitly that children are of much value in Kingdom terms, and that to cause one to sin has the gravest of consequences. Caring for our children and youth is a sacred trust.

*At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea." (Matthew 18:1-6 ESV)*

Mark, in his Gospel account, adds the dimension of Jesus taking the children in his arms and blessing them (Mark 10:16).

As Christian adults we are called to establish a secure environment where the perfect love of God works to cast out all fear (1 John 4:18) and the nurture and love of God are made known to all, and in particular to our children and youth. In this way we can fulfill the biblical mandate to train up our children in the way they should go (Proverbs 22:6).

The purpose of this document is to give instruction to the clergy, laity, and churches of the Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic that will inform our decisions and methods with regard to safeguarding the children and youth entrusted to us and instruct us, providing minimum standards of care and vigilance.

May God be glorified in all we do.



# DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

## The Diocesan Committee to Protect Children

The Bishop in consultation with the Standing Committee appoints committee members. The Committee is responsible for the creation and promulgation of the diocesan Policy for the Protection of Children, under the authority and oversight of the Standing Committee and the Bishop in accordance with the Canons of the Diocese.

The Committee will from time to time update and revise the Policy in light of practical experiences, medical and other scholarly research, legal developments, and other relevant considerations.



## Responsibility for this Policy

The Rector has overall responsibility for the administration of this policy within the church he/she leads and for providing all reports requested by the Diocese. In the absence of a Rector, the Priest-in-Charge, Lay Leader, or the Senior Warden will be responsible. Duties may be delegated, except in those areas specifically delineating action by the Rector.

# DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

## Diocesan Policy on Child Abuse

The Diocese will not tolerate any form of child abuse involving our clergy, lay employees, volunteers or other persons. Everyone who serves the church through educational, pastoral, recreational or other activities is expected to maintain the highest biblical standards in relationships with those to whom they minister, avoiding any form of misconduct against children. That commitment extends to sexual behavior.



No one in the employ or volunteer service of the Diocese or its churches who has a civil or criminal record of child abuse, or who has admitted committing prior sexual abuse of a child, will be permitted to serve with children or youth.

We are also committed to providing pastoral care to all involved with, and/or affected by, instances of child abuse. Pastoral care grows out of Christ-centered relationships and proceeds with an awareness of the spiritual and emotional needs of both the individual and the community. It may include providing guidance, support, consolation, and even confrontation in an effort to minister as we believe God would desire.

## Child Abuse Defined

Child abuse, in practical terms, refers to an act committed by a parent, caregiver or person in a position of trust (even though he/she may not care for the child on a daily basis) which is not accidental and which harms or threatens to harm a child's physical or mental health or welfare.<sup>1</sup> Each state and the District of Columbia has its own definition of what constitutes "child abuse" under civil and criminal laws, and each church in the Diocese should be familiar with the relevant laws and legal definitions in its jurisdiction. In general, the definitions of "child abuse" and "child neglect" in all states in our Diocese include the following elements (among others):

- Physical abuse
- Neglect (both physical and mental)
- Sexual abuse/Exploitation

Some general definitions of child abuse and resources for finding the relevant child abuse reporting laws and legal definitions in each jurisdiction in our Diocese may be found under Tab-A.

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<sup>1</sup> Child abuse may also be a term defined by relevant state laws.

# DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

## Minimum Standard

The Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic requires that, at a minimum, each congregation, mission, and church plant is expected to have in place the following procedures for:

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This minimum standard applies even if there are no children currently in attendance at church events.

The Ministry Safe program provides samples of materials used for screening, training, interacting, monitoring, and reporting.



# DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

## ***Screening Procedures***

One effective means of reducing the incidence of child abuse is to screen carefully all clergy and all lay workers, paid and volunteer, working in youth and children's ministries. The Diocese requires the following screening and background checks for all canonically resident and licensed clergy, and for all employees and volunteers who work with children:

### ***Screening Clergy***

The screening of clergy is the responsibility of the diocesan office. Careful screening of clergy is conducted initially during the ordination and search processes and includes:

- ✓ Conducting National Sexual Offender Registry and Criminal Background checks through Oxford Document Management Company or other diocesan-approved screening providers. Checks should be renewed no less often than every two years. it is the responsibility of all clergy to cooperate fully in all aspects of the screening process and to submit in a timely manner all documents needed to complete such checks
- ✓ Conducting personal and professional reference checks
- ✓ Conducting face-to-face interviews

Note: In addition, a full Oxford Document Management Company background check will normally be done every five years for all clergy in active ministry in the Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic.





# **DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children**

## ***Screening Employees***

The screening of employees is the responsibility of the individual church. Careful screening of employees includes:

- ✓ Reviewing signed job applications for those working in youth and children's ministries
- ✓ Conducting National Sexual Offender Registry and Criminal Background checks; checks should be renewed no less often than every two years
- ✓ Conducting personal and professional reference checks
- ✓ Conducting face-to-face interviews
- ✓ Requiring a signature to certify that he/she and other adult members of the household have not been arrested for, or convicted of, any crime involving child abuse and/or neglect, nor had any such conviction expunged; been charged with child sexual abuse in a civil proceeding; committed an act of child sexual abuse; or (except where such inquiry is prohibited or limited by applicable laws or regulations) been diagnosed with any paraphiliac psychological condition, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, including, but not limited to, pedophilia, voyeurism, or exhibitionism.

## ***Screening Interns, Fellows, and Day Camp Staff***

The screening of interns, fellows, and day camp staff is the responsibility of the individual church. Careful screening of these individuals includes:

- ✓ Reviewing signed applications for those working in youth and children's ministries
- ✓ Conducting National Sexual Offender Registry and Criminal Background checks; checks should be renewed no less often than every two years
- ✓ Conducting personal and other appropriate reference checks
- ✓ Conducting face-to-face interviews.
- ✓ Requiring a signature to certify that he/she and other adult members of the household have not been arrested for, or convicted of, any crime involving child abuse and/or neglect, nor had any such conviction expunged; been charged with child sexual abuse in a civil proceeding; committed an act of child sexual abuse; or (except where such inquiry is prohibited or limited by applicable laws or regulations) been diagnosed with any paraphiliac psychological condition, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, including, but not limited to, pedophilia, voyeurism, or exhibitionism.

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## ***Screening Volunteers***

The screening of volunteers is the responsibility of the individual church. Careful screening of volunteers includes:

- ✓ Requiring a six month minimum attendance rule for volunteers in children's and youth ministries, except where the Bishop, in consultation with the Committee to Protect Children, has granted a variance.
- ✓ Reviewing signed volunteer applications for those working in youth and children's ministries.
- ✓ Conducting National Sexual Offender Registry and Criminal Background checks. Checks should be renewed no less often than every two years.
- ✓ Conducting personal reference checks.
- ✓ Conducting face-to-face interviews.
- ✓ Requiring a signature to certify that he/she and other adult members of the household have not been arrested for, or convicted of, any crime involving child abuse and/or neglect, nor had any such conviction expunged; been charged with child sexual abuse in a civil proceeding; committed an act of child sexual abuse; or (except where such inquiry is prohibited or limited by applicable laws or regulations) been diagnosed with any paraphiliac psychological condition, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, including, but not limited to, pedophilia, voyeurism, or exhibitionism.

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## ***Training Procedures***

Training is also an important deterrent to child abuse. Those who work with children or youth must be trained to recognize the warning signs of potential abuse, as well as learn the procedures for reporting suspected abuse. They also must become familiar with safe practices specific to their church designed to reduce the potential for abuse occurring. The Diocese requires the following training:

### ***Reading Requirements***

All members of the clergy, all members of the vestry, and those staff members with direct supervision over youth or children must certify that they have read, understood and accepted the Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic Policies on the Protection of Children. A sample acknowledgement form is included in Tab-E.

### ***Workshop Attendance Requirements***

Every two years, clergy, vestry, and those staff and volunteers who have contact with youth and children must either:

- ✓ Attend a diocesan-approved training workshop on the prevention of child abuse or
- ✓ Complete the online Sexual Abuse Prevention Course and follow-up test provided by Ministry Safe. Instructions on the implementation of the Ministry Safe program are detailed under Tab-D.

A copy of the certificate of completion that is presented at the end of the diocesan-approved workshop or the proof of completion of the Ministry Safe online training is sufficient to demonstrate compliance with this requirement.

Clergy are responsible to submit to the diocesan office evidence of completed training every two years. Each church is responsible to track and document the training/retraining of its vestry, staff and volunteers.

**All volunteers who have contact with youth and children must also be trained in safe practices specific to their church.**



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## ***Interacting Procedures***

These procedures help children and adults feel safe in ministry and help detect problems before they turn into an incident of abuse.



### ***Communication***

Verbal interactions between clergy, staff members, or volunteers and children should be positive and uplifting. Staff members and volunteers should strive to keep verbal interactions encouraging, constructive, and mindful of their mission of aiding parents in the spiritual growth and development of children.

To this end, clergy, staff members, and volunteers should avoid talking to children or parents in a way that is or could be construed by any reasonable observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. In addition, clergy, staff members, and volunteers are expected to refrain from swearing in the presence of children. Concerns about children should be directed to parents, legal guardians, the appropriate ministry leader, or the clergy.

Clergy, staff members and volunteers should avoid engaging in any sexually-oriented communications with children, (except as noted in the following section in educational or abuse- reporting contexts), and should refrain from discussing any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating, or sexual activities with any child in the program.

Clergy, staff members, and volunteers should report any sexually-oriented communications involving a child to the appropriate ministry leader or clergy.

Clergy, staff members, volunteers, and participants in youth and children's ministries should refrain from the use, possession, or being under the influence of tobacco products, alcohol, or any illegal drugs while in church facilities, while traveling with or in the presence of children or their parents, during church-sponsored activities, or while working with or supervising children.



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## ***Sexually-Oriented Materials***

Staff members and volunteers may employ (subject to limitations imposed by the Rector or Rector's designee) age-appropriate materials when leading discussions dealing with human sexuality/sexual abuse prevention/sexual purity. Any prospective material should normally be made available for review for the parents of participants. Prior to introducing these materials, notice should normally be provided to parents in order to allow an opt-out should there be concerns or objections.

## ***Social Media***

Facebook and all social media avenues are important ways for youth ministry staff and volunteer leaders to connect with students. Their world is often constructed around social media, for better or worse. Having personal interactions in this venue allows adults to model appropriate behavior in social media, and it forms valuable connections with students.

The Diocese strongly recommends that each church have a proactive policy for social media and other forms of electronic communication in the context of children's and youth ministry.

Clergy, staff members, and volunteers shall refrain from connecting with students on social media when students are younger than the minimum age as established by each social media outlet (for example, Facebook's minimum age is currently 13).



## ***Photography***

Photos of children will not be used contrary to parental wishes. Churches should refrain from posting any personally identifying information about children pictured online or in print publications without prior parental permission. This is easily handled by including a consent statement on programming registrations that are signed by the parent/guardian.

# DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

## ***Physical Interaction***

Physical contact should be for the benefit of the child, and never be based upon the emotional needs of a staff member or volunteer. It is the diocesan policy that staff members and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any manner for behavioral management of children. No form of physical discipline is acceptable.

This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviors by children. Children are to be disciplined using time-outs and other non-physical methods of behavior management. In some circumstances physical restraint may be used to prevent self-injury by the child and/or harm to others or to property. Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported immediately to parents, the Children's Ministry Director, Youth Pastor, and/or clergy.

Those who serve, whether as clergy or lay workers, paid or volunteer, maintain a powerful relationship of authority and trust with the people to whom they minister. Betrayal of that trust through violation of sexual boundaries causes great emotional and spiritual harm. Such misconduct is a denial of our calling as Christians and may be a violation of the law. We must take every step to prevent it, and to respond with swift justice should misconduct occur.



# DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

The following standards of interaction with children shall be carefully followed at all times:

- ✓ **Appropriate physical affection between staff members or volunteers and children is important for children's development, and is generally suitable in the church setting.**
  - Appropriate physical affection includes:
    - high-fives
    - handshakes
    - fist bumps
    - thumbs up
    - head pat
    - side hug
    - smiling
    - pats on the back
  - Inappropriate physical affection includes:
    - wrestling
    - tickling
    - sitting in laps (except for nursery-aged children)
    - kissing on the lips
    - full frontal hugs
    - commenting on children's bodies
    - forcing unwanted affection
- ✓ **Inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden.** Any inappropriate behavior or suspected abuse by a staff member or volunteer must be reported immediately to 1) an immediate supervisor, and 2) the Senior Warden and/or clergy.
- ✓ **Physical contact and affection should be given only in observable places.** It is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or misinterpreted when physical contact is open to observation.
- ✓ **Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing.** The personal behavior of staff members or volunteers in Youth and Children's Ministries must foster trust at all times. Personal conduct must be above reproach.
- ✓ **Do not force physical contact, touch, or affection on a reluctant child.** A child's preference not to be touched must be respected at all times.
- ✓ **Children's staff members and volunteers are responsible for protecting children under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others.**

# **DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children**

## ***Restroom Use***

### ***Nursery-Aged and Special Needs Children***

Because nursery and special needs children may require complete assistance with their bathroom activities, all staff members and volunteers will observe the following policies:

#### ***Diapering***

- ✓ Only screened and trained nursery workers or the child's parent or legal guardian will undertake the diapering of children of either sex.<sup>2</sup>
- ✓ Changing of diapers should be done in plain sight of other nursery workers; children should not be left unattended while being changed.
- ✓ Children should be re-diapered and re-clothed immediately upon the completion of changing their soiled diaper.

#### ***Toilet Training***

- ✓ No child will be forced to toilet train.
- ✓ Only screened and trained nursery workers or the child's parent or legal guardian will participate in toilet training efforts with children.
- ✓ When children are assisted in bathrooms the stall door will be left partially open.
- ✓ Preschool-aged children will never be left unattended in bathrooms.
- ✓ Children should be assisted in straightening their clothing before returning to the room with other children.
- ✓ "Accidents" should be handled by reassuring the child and completing the changing of diapers or underwear and clothing.

### ***Elementary-Aged Children***

- ✓ Elementary-age children may be accompanied to the restroom for supervision and assistance when needed. (However, children should receive the minimum amount of assistance needed based upon their individual capabilities.) A same-aged-peer buddy system may also be used.
- ✓ Staff members and volunteers should take steps to avoid being alone with one child in the restroom. If a staff member or volunteer must go into the restroom to check on an individual child, he or she should seek out another worker to accompany him/her. If another worker is not available to accompany, he/she should go to the exterior bathroom door, knock, and ask if the child needs assistance. If the child requires assistance, the worker should leave the exterior bathroom door open when entering the bathroom area and try verbally to assist the child in completing his/her activities, while the child remains behind the door of the bathroom stall.

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<sup>2</sup> Churches are encouraged to be sensitive to the fact that nationally one out of every three to four women has been the victim of some form of child sexual abuse, typically by a male offender. It is well documented by researchers that there are certain times in the lives of abuse survivors when they are more prone to triggers (internal or external reminders of the trauma). The birth of a child is often such a trigger. To build trust, churches may determine that diapering, toilet training and restroom monitoring will only be done by screened and trained female staff/volunteers or the child's parent/guardian.



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## ***First Aid and Medication***

If possible, medication should be administered by the child's parent. Medication may be given to a child by a staff member or volunteer as authorized by the parent. The medication must be in the original packaging, including over-the-counter medication.

When medically necessary, medication or first aid may be given to a child by a staff member or volunteer consistent with the Supervisory Plan (see pages 14 and 15). Parents should be notified whenever medication or first aid has been administered.



# DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

## ***The Release of Children***

Any time that a child has been entrusted to church staff members or volunteers, the church incurs responsibility for the safety and well-being of the child. Staff members and volunteers must act to ensure the appropriate supervision and safety of children in their charge.



Children's Ministries staff members or volunteers are responsible for releasing children in their care at the close of services or activities only to parents, legal guardians, or other persons designated by parents or legal guardians. It is presumed that a person who drops off a child or student has authority to pick up the child.

In the event that staff members or volunteers are uncertain of the propriety of releasing a child, they should immediately contact their immediate supervisor before releasing the child.

# **DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children**

## ***Transportation***

Staff members and volunteers may from time to time be in a position to provide transportation for children. The following guidelines should be strictly observed when workers are involved in the transportation of children:

- ✓ Adult volunteer drivers must provide to the church copies of valid driver's licenses, vehicle registration, and proof of insurance.
- ✓ It is understood that the adult driving the child must have undergone a background check including a DMV record check. Use of child safety seats that meet federal standards is required. Drivers and passengers must also follow airbag age/weight regulations per specific vehicle guidelines. Churches are advised to consult with their insurance provider regarding the minimum age for adult drivers. Under no circumstances should anyone under the age of 18 be allowed to drive children/youth as part of an event.
- ✓ At no time shall there be one adult and one child traveling in a vehicle (except in a parent/child or other familial situation). Automobiles will contain either one driver and two or more participants or two adults and any number of children (within the seat belt limitations of the vehicle; seatbelts are ALWAYS required). If there is an extenuating circumstance causing only one adult and one child to travel together in an automobile, permission must be obtained by a parent or legal guardian of the child. This permission should be written and signed by the parent/guardian or documented by the volunteer if only verbal consent is obtainable.
- ✓ No cell phones, including hands-free devices, may be utilized by the driver while driving church-owned vehicles, unless in an emergency.
- ✓ Children should be transported directly to their destination. Unauthorized stops to a non-public place should be avoided. Stops for meals, refueling, and restroom breaks should be done as a group. Staff members and volunteers should avoid transportation circumstances that leave only one child in transport.
- ✓ Staff members and volunteers should avoid physical contact with children while in vehicles.
- ✓ No one under age 25 may drive vehicles rented by a church unless explicitly allowed by the rental agreement.
- ✓ No drivers under age 25 may drive church-owned vehicles unless explicitly covered by the church's auto insurance policy.

# DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

## ***Monitoring Procedures***

Monitoring helps detect problems before they turn into an incident of abuse and helps adults avoid wrongful allegations of abuse where none has occurred. Research confirms that off-site activities increase the risk of abuse. Vestry, clergy, staff, and volunteers must be diligent in monitoring and supervising children's and youth activities in all settings at all times.

### ***Monitoring practices include, but are not limited to the following:***

- ✓ All children and youth activities shall be designed to be supervised by two or more screened and trained individuals. No child will ever be left unattended in the building or on the property during or following a church activity.
- ✓ **Clergy, staff members, and volunteers should not conduct unobserved meetings or interactions with children.**
- ✓ In a discipleship or mentoring relationship, the interactions should take place in a public place or where other persons are present.
- ✓ Watching for policy violations
- ✓ An open invitation for parents to visit at any time unannounced
- ✓ A careful review of new programs and/or significant changes to a program structure
- ✓ Keeping interaction with children in full view of others at all times. Keeping unused rooms locked where possible
- ✓ Keeping children and youth in supervised areas within the church building
- ✓ An onsite or offsite written Supervisory Plan shall be in place for all educational, pastoral, recreational, or other programming that involves youth or children. Please refer to Tab-F for a sample Supervisory Plan.





# DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

## ***On-site Supervisory Plans shall include:***

- ✓ A description of the nature of the activity
- ✓ The details of the registration process and registration form
- ✓ The personnel responsible for running the activity
- ✓ The following is the recommended ratio of adults to children, (recommendation based on Virginia standards):

**Infants:** 2 adults for up to 8; 1 additional adult for every additional 1 to 4 infants

**Young toddlers:** 2 adults for up to 10; 1 additional adult for every additional 1 to 5 toddlers

**2 and 3 years:** 2 adults for up to 16; 1 additional adult for every additional 1 to 8 2-to-3-year-olds

**4 years:** 2 adults for up to 20; 1 additional adult for every additional 1 to 10 4-year-olds

**School age:** 2 adults for up to 36; 1 additional adult for every additional 1 to 18 school-age child

**Mixed age group:** ratio for the youngest child in the group

- ✓ The physical environment
- ✓ Bathroom procedures
- ✓ First aid and medication procedures
- ✓ The reporting of discipline concerns
- ✓ The release of children



# DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

***For off-site activities, the Supervisory Plan shall include:***

- ✓ A description of the nature of the activity
- ✓ The details of the registration process and registration form
- ✓ The personnel responsible for running the activity
- ✓ The following is the recommended ratio of adults to children (recommendation based on Virginia requirements):



- **Infants:** 2 adults for up to 8; 1 additional adult for every additional 1 to 4 infants.
- **Young toddlers:** 2 adults for up to 10; 1 additional adult for every additional 1 to 5 toddlers.
- **2 and 3 years:** 2 adults for up to 16; 1 additional adult for every additional 1 to 8 2-to-3- year-olds.
  - **4 years 2 adults:** for up to 20; 1 additional adult for every additional 1 to 10 4-year-olds.
- **School age:** 2 adults for up to 36; 1 additional adult for every additional 1 to 18 school-age child and
  - **Mixed age group:** ratio for the youngest child in the group
- ✓ The physical environment
- ✓ Bathroom procedures
- ✓ First aid and medication procedures
- ✓ The reporting of discipline concerns
- ✓ Offsite transportation plan
- ✓ Dining arrangements
- ✓ Sleeping arrangements
- ✓ Showering arrangements
- ✓ Staff members and volunteers should never be nude in the presence of children in their care. In the event there is a situation that may call for or contemplate the possibility of nudity (i.e. changing clothes during a pool party, a weekend or overnight retreat, etc.), the Children's Ministry Director or Youth Pastor will detail procedures for showering or changing clothes in the supervisory plan for the scheduled event.
- ✓ The release of children

# DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

## ***Responding and Reporting Procedures***

State laws generally require that certain categories of persons responsible for the care or treatment of children report to state authorities when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused or neglected, or is in danger of abuse or neglect. The specific laws - and thus their specific requirements - vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. For example, some states require any person having cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health and welfare has been or will be adversely affected by abuse or neglect to report immediately to authorities. Other states require only those who have special occupations, such as nurses, counselors, teachers, physicians, law enforcement officers, or the like, to report suspected cases of abuse.

Every church in the Diocese should be familiar with, and every person responsible for the care of children in the church should be made aware of, the applicable child abuse reporting requirements and procedures in that jurisdiction.

In addition to complying with any applicable legal requirements, churches should also have in place appropriate procedures for internal reporting to appropriate church leaders of any suspected mistreatment of or injury to a child and any suspicious or unusual information about a child.

***Each church in the Diocese should review the applicable laws in its jurisdiction<sup>3</sup> and should create a written response plan that is consistent with those laws.***

The following section of the diocesan policy briefly outlines several response and reporting procedures:

1. Responding to the Child Victim
2. Reporting to Church Authorities
3. Reporting to Legal Authorities in Accordance with Applicable Laws
4. Release of Information
5. Internal Church Communication and Reporting

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<sup>3</sup> As a helpful resource, the Diocese makes available on its web site at the following URL, [www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws\\_policies/state](http://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/state), links to the child abuse reporting laws in each jurisdiction covered by the diocese, as those laws were in effect at the time this policy was initially promulgated. However, such laws can change over time, and it is the responsibility of the individual church to make certain that it has identified and understands the child abuse reporting laws that currently apply to it at any specific time.

# DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

## **1. Responding to the Child Victim**

One of several ways in which the clergy, staff member, or volunteer may come to suspect child abuse or neglect is from information that a child himself or herself shares.<sup>4</sup> If a child discloses abuse or neglect, the clergy, staff member, or volunteer receiving such a communication should attempt to:

- Respect the child's privacy by finding an appropriate non-threatening place to talk.
- If reasonably possible, ask a staff member, trained volunteer, or other responsible adult to join in listening to the child's/youth's account.<sup>5</sup>
- Keep calm, listen, and avoid expressing shock or outrage.
- Let the child know that he/she is believed.
- Assure the child that any abuse was not his/her fault.
- If helpful, tell the child that he/she was brave to disclose the abuse.
- Child victims are often vague in their initial disclosure. Avoid questions that could make the child feel responsible or plant ideas that could taint the child's recollection and account.
- Write down as accurately as possible what the child disclosed. This information can be used in filing the Report of Suspected Abuse Form found under Tab-C.
- Be careful afterwards not to discuss the information with or in front of other people who do not need to know what happened. Discussion about the information should be limited to appropriate church and legal authorities, as discussed further below.

## **2. Reporting to Church Authorities**

Churches should also have in place appropriate internal procedures and mechanisms for reporting to appropriate church leaders any suspected child abuse or neglect, any other suspected mistreatment of or injury to a child, and any suspicious information involving a child. Such internal reporting allows church leaders to determine whether a legal reporting obligation has been triggered, whether further information is needed, and/or whether pastoral or other care for children and others should be offered.

At times, when the church leader receiving such reports puts together the separate pieces of information provided by different workers, the leader may discern a pattern or recognize information that triggers further investigation and/or a report to state authorities. (Such internal church reporting procedures are not intended to supersede any applicable legal reporting requirements.)

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<sup>4</sup> Reasonable suspicion that a child is abused or neglected may also occur in other ways. For example, a perpetrator may confess such abuse or neglect to a clergy member, or a church worker may observe physical or behavioral indicators of abuse or neglect in a child.

<sup>5</sup> However, at times the child's communication may occur so quickly and/or unexpectedly that there may not be time to involve another responsible adult.



# DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

It is critical to be prepared in advance by adopting an appropriate plan and following that plan if an incident or allegation of child abuse occurs. When there is reason to believe child abuse or neglect has occurred or is occurring, act immediately. Do not ignore or fail to take seriously any reported incident.

- **Implement Your Response Plan.** The church should have in place an appropriate plan (even if only a very brief one) to use when responding to any allegation of child abuse. That plan may include a “response team” of individuals instructed with proper response mechanisms, along with additional procedures to implement throughout the church in responding to the allegation. This diocesan policy on child protection provides a number of resources and models that should be helpful in framing a good church response plan.
- **Report to the Rector (or other appropriate individual).** The individual(s) suspecting abuse or neglect should immediately notify the Rector and Senior Warden (or another person designated by the Rector or Senior Warden or otherwise identified in the church’s child abuse reporting procedures as authorized to receive such reports) of the suspected child abuse. The church should also identify in its response plan and other children’s ministry policies other persons who may receive such a report if the Rector or Senior Warden is the person who is the subject of the allegations or is otherwise suspected of having committed abuse or neglect.
- **Suspend Person Accused of Abuse from Duties.** If the person accused of abuse is employed by or volunteering with the church, the Rector (or his designee) should immediately remove the person accused of abuse from the situation in which the accusation arose and from any duties where he/she will have any further contact with children. This can be done quietly and without fanfare, but should be done quickly and without exception. An interim transfer to a position that has no contact with children is one possibility; a leave of absence (with pay if the person is an employee) may be another solution. The church leadership will determine whether the person accused of abuse will continue in ministry.
- **Notify Parents Where Appropriate.** If the person accused of abuse is not the child’s parent or guardian or otherwise a member of the household, the Rector or his designee should contact the child’s parents or appropriate guardians and offer support from the church.
- **Notify the Bishop.** The Rector shall notify the Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic. The Bishop shall notify the diocesan Chancellor. The Bishop may request periodic updates of the investigation being conducted and subsequent actions taken at the local church level and/or may initiate his own investigation into the allegations of child abuse.
- **Notify the Church Legal Counsel.** In most circumstances, the Rector should notify the church’s legal counsel. Obtaining competent legal advice at the very outset of the matter will help protect the church from failing to comply with legal duties and/or being exposed to additional legal liability. In addition, if the investigation is conducted by legal counsel, the information gathered and conveyed to the attorney may be privileged from disclosure as a confidential attorney/client communication under certain state laws.

# DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

### 3. Reporting to Legal Authorities in Accordance with Applicable Laws<sup>6</sup>

No allegations or complaints or reports of suspected abuse should be ignored. As discussed above, churches should be aware of and should comply with any applicable legal obligations to report suspected child abuse and neglect.

Further, even where reports are not legally required, voluntary reports of suspected abuse or neglect are legally permitted in all jurisdictions in the Diocese and should always be considered with the assistance of legal counsel.

If the church determines that a report is legally required or decides that it should make a permissive report even though one is not legally required, the contact information in the box may be helpful in reaching appropriate legal authorities.

#### CONTACT INFORMATION

- **District of Columbia:** Call the DC Child and Family Service Agency: **202-671-7233.**
- **Maryland:** Call **1-800-332-6347.**
- **Virginia:** The statewide toll-free child abuse hotline is **1-800-552-7096.**
- **North Carolina:** You must call the individual county number for Child Protective Services. County numbers are found under Tab – B.

For states not listed,  
call **Childhelp** at  
**1-800-4-A-Child (1-800-422-4453).**

This information is current as of the date upon which this policy is being promulgated, but should be updated by the church at least annually. Please see Tab – B for more complete reporting information.

- **Cooperate With Investigating Legal Authorities.** Subject to advice of the church's legal counsel, the church should cooperate in the investigation conducted by the governmental agency to which the report has been made, as well as any other law enforcement agencies involved with the investigation.
- **Notify Insurance Providers.** Unless the church's legal counsel advises otherwise, the church should promptly notify its liability insurance company. This is important for at least four reasons: (1) the insurance policy may require immediate notification for coverage to be effective; (2) the policy may pay for counseling or legal advice; (3) the policy may not provide coverage for lawsuits involving acts of sexual abuse; and (4) the insurance carrier, having dealt with similar cases, may be a source of helpful advice. Unfortunately, most insurance policies do not generally cover sexual misconduct or negligent hiring/supervision in sexual

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<sup>6</sup> The Rector or other appropriate church leaders should consult with the church's legal counsel for assistance in identifying and complying with the appropriate abuse reporting requirements within the required time frame under applicable state laws. For example, consultation with legal counsel may be important to determine: (1) whether a reporting obligation exists; and (2) whether the worker is protected from such an obligation by an applicable legal privilege (such as the clergy privilege).

# DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

abuse situations. Separate “riders” can be purchased, although some require strict preconditions to insurance coverage like screening, awareness, and prevention training.

- **Appropriately Document Actions.** Designated clergy should document any actions taken regarding the complaint, and retain that documentation in confidential files. (The church’s legal counsel may have specific instructions for how such documentation should be prepared and maintained.) It should be noted that the investigation of suspected child abuse is the legal responsibility of the police or child protective authorities. It is not the responsibility of church leaders to prove that such an incident did or did not take place.

## 4. Release of Information

- **Carefully Consider Any Release of Information.** Identify a single person to respond to all inquiries (media or otherwise), such as a specially trained management person, and instruct all other workers politely to direct all inquiries to that person. Use an approved, prepared statement to answer media inquiries and to convey news to members of the church. Such a statement should normally be reviewed by the church’s legal counsel. Don’t release any information until the church has solidly confirmed its factual content. Safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of all involved by not releasing names or other identifying information, especially that concerning minors.
- **Maintain Appropriate Confidentiality** of any allegations and of the investigation as much as possible. Emphasize the importance of maintaining the confidentiality of the investigation to each person who is interviewed and instruct them not to disclose any information regarding the allegations or your investigation to anyone other than law enforcement or child protective authorities. Maintaining appropriate confidentiality will: (1) protect the privacy and reputations of those actually or allegedly involved in the incident; (2) reduce the risk that defamation may occur; and (3) help preserve the attorney-client privilege, where otherwise applicable.
- **Reach Out to and Care for Any Victims.** One of your church’s primary missions is sharing the love of God with children. Offer whatever pastoral care and other help is appropriate and available to the alleged victim and his/her family.
- **Treat the Accused With Dignity and Support.** Since the accused has not been formally charged or convicted, he/she should be treated as innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. Be supportive but objective.
- **Bring Closure to the Investigation.** If the accused is eventually convicted, then discipline or dismissal is generally appropriate. Counseling may also be appropriate. If charges are unsubstantiated, the decision about whether to restore the accused to full employment or volunteer service may depend on a number of circumstantial factors. Consult the Bishop and legal counsel for guidance. Of course, all personnel actions should be well documented in writing and kept in confidential files. Attorney-client privileged material should never be disclosed without first consulting your attorney.

# DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

It is essential that each church respond to a report or instance of abuse in a manner that promotes healing for the victim, the person accused of abuse, and the loved ones of both parties, as well as healing in the local church.

## **5. Internal Church Communication and Reporting**

In addition to the reporting obligations discussed above, clergy, staff members, and volunteers shall also promptly internally report to the appropriate ministry leader or clergy, an immediate supervisor, and/or to the Rector (or his/her designee) whenever the clergy, staff member, or volunteer:

- Is involved in or becomes aware of any sexually-oriented communications involving a child connected with the church; or
- Is involved in or becomes aware of any inappropriate behavior involving a child by a clergy person, a staff member, or a volunteer; or
- Is arrested for, or convicted of, any crime involving child abuse and/or neglect, is charged with child sexual abuse in a civil proceeding; commits an act of child sexual abuse; or (except as otherwise prohibited or limited by applicable laws and regulations) is diagnosed with any paraphiliac psychological condition, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, including, but not limited to, pedophilia, voyeurism or exhibitionism; or
- Becomes aware that a member of his/her household has been arrested for, or convicted of, any crime involving child abuse and/or neglect; been charged with child sexual abuse in a civil proceeding; committed an act of child sexual abuse; or (except as otherwise prohibited or limited by applicable laws and regulations) been diagnosed with any paraphiliac psychological condition, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, including, but not limited to, pedophilia, voyeurism or exhibitionism; or
- Becomes aware that a person who is attending the church has been arrested for, or convicted of, any crime involving child abuse and/or neglect; has been charged with child sexual abuse in a civil proceeding; has committed an act of child sexual abuse; or (except as otherwise prohibited or limited by applicable laws and regulations) has been diagnosed with any paraphiliac psychological condition, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, including, but not limited to, pedophilia, voyeurism or exhibitionism.

*Such information is important to enable church leaders to see that appropriate child protection mechanisms are in place in accordance with this policy.*

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## Home Group Procedures

The Diocese and its churches do not have, and therefore do not exercise, control over home groups. The care and protection of children in such settings is always the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s) of each child. The Diocese provides some resources that may help empower and equip parents/guardians and the home groups of its churches as they exercise their care and responsibility. In home groups where children are present, even on an occasional basis, leaders are encouraged to read this policy, take diocesan-approved child abuse prevention training, and follow as closely as possible the provisions outlined in this policy, including the development of a supervision plan, which should consider the following:<sup>7</sup>

- Supervision by two screened and trained individuals. Supervision by a single individual is never a good idea.
- Physical environment should be inspected and prepared for child safety for the developmental age of those being served, (keeping in mind outlet coverings, sharp corners, sharp objects, unsecured furniture, access to outdoors, toxic materials, etc.).
- Restroom procedure. For any child who requires assistance, parents should be responsible for diapering and meeting other restroom needs.



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<sup>7</sup> "Home group" is defined for purposes of this policy as a small group meeting in a home for Bible study, worship, fellowship, etc. A church which holds its primary worship service in a home is, for purposes of this policy, considered to be a "church" and not a "home group."



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## **Diocesan Documentation Requirements**

Churches are responsible for obtaining and keeping documentation, which includes evidence of the following:

- ✓ Employee and volunteer applications for those working in youth and children's ministries.
- ✓ National Sexual Offender Registry and Criminal Background checks renewed every two years.
- ✓ Personal and professional reference checks.
- ✓ For drivers: copy of valid driver's license, vehicle registration, DMV record, and proof of auto insurance.
- ✓ Interviews.
- ✓ Certification that the employee or volunteer has read, understood, and accepted the Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic Policies on the Protection of Children.
- ✓ Diocesan-approved workshop or online course completion and certificate renewal every two years.
- ✓ Written supervisory plans.
- ✓ Reports of suspected child abuse, see Tab-C (should be kept in a secured location).



## **Resources for the Protection of Children**

# DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

## Tab – A: State Reporting Laws and Forms of Child Abuse

### In General

Child abuse, in practical terms, refers to an act committed by a parent, caregiver or person in a position of trust (even though he/she may not care for the child on a daily basis) which is not accidental and which harms or threatens to harm a child's physical or mental health or welfare.

Each state and the District of Columbia has its own definition of what constitutes "child abuse" under civil and criminal laws, and each church in the Diocese should be familiar with the relevant laws and legal definitions in its jurisdiction. In general, the definitions of "child abuse" and "child neglect" in all states in our Diocese include the following elements (among others):

- Physical abuse
- Neglect (both physical and mental)
- Sexual abuse/Exploitation

This Appendix provides some general definitions of child abuse and resources for finding the relevant child abuse reporting laws and legal definitions in each jurisdiction in our Diocese.

In addition, substantial information about child abuse and neglect prevention, response, and reporting can be found at the Child Welfare Information Gateway, which is online at:

<http://www.childwelfare.gov>

A service of the Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, this site provides access to print and electronic publications, websites, databases, and online learning tools for improving child welfare practice, including resources that can be shared with families.

To access information about a particular state visit this page on the site:

[www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws\\_policies/state](http://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/state)

Please note that although the information on the [www.childwelfare.gov](http://www.childwelfare.gov) site is updated periodically, it is not always completely up-to-date. It is always important to check (or to have legal counsel check) the most recent laws and regulations in your state.

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## Virginia Laws:

As of August 28, 2013, the Virginia child abuse reporting laws are accessible online at the following URLs:

<http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?000+cod+TOC630200000150000000000000>

<http://leg1.state.va.us/cgi-bin/legp504.exe?000+cod+TOC630200000150000000000000>

Relevant definitions may currently be found at the following URLs:

<http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?000+cod+63.2-100>

<http://leg1.state.va.us/cgi-bin/legp504.exe?000+cod+63.2-100>

<http://leg1.state.va.us/cgi-bin/legp504.exe?000+cod+63.2-1509>

Several significant specific provisions of the Virginia child abuse reporting laws may be found at the following URLs:

<http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?000+cod+63.2-1509>

<http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?000+cod+63.2-1510>

<http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?000+cod+63.2-1512>

<http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?000+cod+63.2-1513>

## Maryland Laws:

As of August 28, 2013, the Maryland Annotated Code is available online at the following URLs:

<http://www.lexisnexis.com/hottopics/mdcode/>

<http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/webmga/frmStatutes.aspx?pid=statpage&tab=subject5>

<http://lib.guides.umd.edu/content.php?pid=131120&sid=1126003>

<http://www.lawlib.state.md.us/researchtools/sourcesmdlaw.html>

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The online Maryland Annotated Code does not permit linking to specific titles and sections. Therefore, this Appendix is not able to link to the specific child abuse reporting laws. But such subdivisions can be accessed by drilling down through specific links on these web pages.

As of August 1, 2013, the general citation for the Maryland Child Abuse and Neglect law is Maryland Family Law Code §5-701 *et seq.* The following illustrates the general structure of this law:

Maryland Family Law Code  
Title 5. Children.  
Subtitle 7. Child Abuse and Neglect.

Further helpful information may be found at the website of the Child Protective Services division of the Maryland Department of Human Resources, including at the following URL:

[http://www.dhr.state.md.us/blog/?page\\_id=3969](http://www.dhr.state.md.us/blog/?page_id=3969)

[http://www.dhr.state.md.us/blog/?page\\_id=3973](http://www.dhr.state.md.us/blog/?page_id=3973)

## District of Columbia Laws:

As of August 28, 2013, the District of Columbia Official Code is available online at the following URLs:

<http://www.lexisnexis.com/hottopics/dccode/>

The online D.C. Code does not permit linking to specific titles and sections. Therefore, this appendix is not able to link to the specific child abuse reporting laws. But such subdivisions can be accessed by drilling down through specific links on these web pages.

As of August 28, 2013, the general citation for the District of Columbia Child Abuse and Neglect law is D.C. Code § 4-1301.02 *et seq.* The following illustrates the general structure of this law:

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA OFFICIAL CODE  
DIVISION I. GOVERNMENT OF DISTRICT  
TITLE 4. PUBLIC CARE SYSTEMS  
CHAPTER 13. CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT  
SUBCHAPTER I. PREVENTION OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT  
PART A . REPORTING ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Important definitions are also currently provided in D.C. Code § 16-2301.



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## North Carolina laws:

The official version of the North Carolina General Statutes is not freely accessible on the Internet. The official version may be obtained for a fee from Lexis/Nexis. An **unofficial** version of the North Carolina General Statutes is provided by the North Carolina General Assembly free of charge online at the following URL:

<http://www.ncleg.net/gascripts/statutes/statutes.asp>

As of August 28, 2013, the statutory citation to the North Carolina child abuse reporting law is North Carolina General Statutes §7B-101, §7B-301, *et seq.* Important sections include (without limitation) §7B-101, §7B-301, §7B-309, and §7B-310.

An unofficial version of these North Carolina child abuse reporting laws can be accessed via:

<http://www.ncleg.net/gascripts/Statutes/StatutesTOC.pl?Chapter=0007B>

[http://www.ncleg.net/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/PDF/ByChapter/Chapter\\_7B.pdf](http://www.ncleg.net/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/PDF/ByChapter/Chapter_7B.pdf)

Relevant definitions may be found at:

[http://www.ncleg.net/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/HTML/BySection/Chapter\\_7B/GS\\_7B-101.html](http://www.ncleg.net/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/HTML/BySection/Chapter_7B/GS_7B-101.html)

Other potentially relevant provisions of this law may be found at:

[http://www.ncleg.net/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/HTML/BySection/Chapter\\_7B/GS\\_7B-301.html](http://www.ncleg.net/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/HTML/BySection/Chapter_7B/GS_7B-301.html)

[http://www.ncleg.net/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/HTML/BySection/Chapter\\_7B/GS\\_7B-309.html](http://www.ncleg.net/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/HTML/BySection/Chapter_7B/GS_7B-309.html)

[http://www.ncleg.net/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/HTML/BySection/Chapter\\_7B/GS\\_7B-310.html](http://www.ncleg.net/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/HTML/BySection/Chapter_7B/GS_7B-310.html)

Additional helpful information about child abuse and neglect is provided on the website of the North Carolina Division of Social Services, including at the following URL:

<http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dss/cps/about.htm>

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## Additional Virginia Resources:

The Virginia Department of Social Services has provided some helpful additional information about child abuse or neglect. Congregations should also consult with the corresponding agency in their home jurisdiction for similar guidance. According to the Virginia Department of Social Services, child abuse refers to an act committed by a parent, caregiver, or person in a position of trust (even though he/she may not care for the child on a daily basis) which is not accidental and which harms or threatens to harm a child's physical or mental health or welfare.

**Physical Abuse:** A physical injury, threat of injury, or creation of a real and significant danger of substantial risk of death, disfigurement, or impairment of bodily functions. Such injury or threat of injury, regardless of intent, is inflicted or allowed to be inflicted by non-accidental means. Examples: asphyxiation, bone fracture, brain damage, skull fracture, subdural hematoma, burns, scalding, cuts, bruises, welts, abrasions, internal injuries, poisoning, sprains, dislocations, gunshot, stabbing wounds.

**Physical Neglect:** The failure to provide food, clothing, shelter or supervision for a child if the child's health or safety is endangered. Physical neglect may include multiple occurrences or a one-time critical or severe event that results in a threat to health or safety, such as a toddler left alone. Other types of neglect include abandonment, inadequate supervision, inadequate clothing, inadequate shelter, inadequate personal hygiene, inadequate food, and malnutrition.

**Sexual Abuse:** Sexual abuse of a child is a criminal offense in every state in the United States. Regardless of state, an abused child is defined, in part, as a child less than eighteen years old, whose parents or other persons responsible for his/her care:

**Commit or allow to be committed any illegal sexual act upon [that] child, including incest, rape, indecent exposure, and prostitution, or to allow [that] child to be used in any sexually explicit visual material.**

Sexual abuse encompasses acts of sexual assault and sexual exploitation by a parent or other caregiver. It includes a broad range of behaviors, such as fondling; oral, vaginal, or anal intercourse; indecent exposure; voyeurism; and sexual exploitation. It may consist of a single incident or of many incidents over a long period of time. Victims range in age from infants up to the age of 18.

**Medical Neglect:** The refusal or failure by a caregiver to obtain and/or follow through with a complete regimen of medical, mental, or dental care for a condition, which if untreated, could result in illness or developmental delays.

**Failure to Thrive:** A syndrome of infancy or early childhood that is characterized by growth failure, signs of severe malnutrition, and variable degrees of developmental retardation. Children are

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considered to be in this category only when the syndrome is diagnosed by a physician and is caused by non-organic factors.

**Mental Abuse/Neglect:** A pattern of acts or omissions by the caregiver that results in harm to a child's psychological or emotional health or development.

**Educational Neglect:** The failure of the child's caretaker to ensure that the child attends school or an approved alternative program of study.

**Bizarre Discipline:** Any actions in which the caregiver uses eccentric, irrational, or grossly inappropriate procedures or devices to modify the child's behavior.

## Federal Definition of Sexual Exploitation of Children

Sexual exploitation of children is defined is defined in the United State Code as:

### 18 U.S.C. 2251 – SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN

It is forbidden for any person to employ, use, persuade, induce, entice, or coerce any minor to engage or assist any other person to engage in, or to transport any minor in interstate or foreign commerce with the intent that the minor engage in, any sexually explicit conduct if such person knows or has reason to know that such visual depiction was produced using materials that have been mailed, shipped, or transported in interstate or foreign commerce by any means, including by computer, or if such visual depiction has actually been transported in interstate or foreign commerce or mailed.

It is forbidden for any parent, legal guardian, or person having custody or control of a minor to knowingly permit such minor to engage or assist any other person to engage in sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing any visual depiction of such conduct if the parent, legal guardian, or person knows or has reason to know that such visual depiction will be transported in interstate or foreign commerce or mailed, if that visual depiction was produced using materials that have been mailed, shipped, or transported in interstate or foreign commerce by any means, including by computer, or if such visual depiction has actually been transported in interstate or foreign commerce or mailed.

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## Tab – B: How to Report Abuse to Child Protective Services

Please note that the following numbers may not always work if the reporting party is not calling from the same state where the child is allegedly being abused.

For states not listed, or when the reporting party resides in a different state than the child, please call **Childhelp, 1-800-4-A-Child** (1-800-422-4453), or your local child protective agency.

- To report suspected child abuse in the **District of Columbia**, call the DC Child and Family Service Agency: **202-671-7233**.
- The **Virginia** statewide toll-free child abuse hotline is **1-800-552-7096**.
- To report suspected child abuse in **Maryland** call **1-800-332-6347**.
- To report suspected child abuse in **North Carolina** you must call the individual county number for Child Protective Services. You will find numbers listed by county below.

Although the name of the person reporting the suspected abuse may be requested for follow-up purposes, the person reporting abuse to Child Protective Services is generally NOT required to give his/her name. If the person reporting does provide his name and requests anonymity, there are legal mechanisms in place in each state to protect the reporter from having his/her name given to the alleged abuser, unless otherwise ordered by a court.

### ***Information to Provide to Child Protective Services When Reporting Suspected Child Abuse***

It is helpful for the person reporting suspected abuse to provide the following:

- ✓ The name and address of the child and the parent or person responsible for his/her care.
- ✓ The names of other persons, especially children, living in the suspected victim's home.
- ✓ Address of the child's home.
- ✓ The child's age, sex, and race.
- ✓ The name of the school the child attends.
- ✓ The name and address of the alleged abuser, if known.
- ✓ A description of the alleged abuse and or neglect, including how long it may have been happening.
- ✓ The relationship between the person reporting the abuse and the child.

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Please refer to Tab-C for a sample Report of Suspected Child Abuse form to be used when reporting allegations of child abuse to Child Protective Services and other authorities.

Once completed, that form should be kept in a confidential file with the church.

## ***Child Protective Services Procedure after Initial Report***

If the Child Protective Services worker determines that the report of abuse is a valid complaint, then the complaint must be investigated. To constitute a valid complaint, all of the following criteria must be met:

- ✓ The child must be under the age of 18 at the time of the complaint.
- ✓ The alleged abuser must be the child's parent or caretaker at the time of the abuse.
- ✓ The report must be made in the city or county where (a) the child lives, (b) the abuse occurred, or (c) if neither of these is known, where the abuse is discovered and
- ✓ The circumstances must meet the state definition of abuse or neglect.



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## **DIRECTORY OF NORTH CAROLINA COUNTY DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

Alamance County DSS  
Tel. #336-570-6532

Caldwell County DSS  
Tel. #828-426-8200

Alexander County DSS  
Tel. #828-632-1080, Ext. 357

Camden County DSS  
Tel. #252-331-4787

Alleghany County DSS  
Tel. #336-372-2411

Carteret County DSS  
Tel. #252-728-3181

Anson County DSS  
Tel. #704-694-9351

Caswell County DSS  
Tel. #336-694-4141

Ashe County DSS  
Tel. #336-846-5700

Catawba County DSS  
Tel. #828-695-5600

Avery County DSS  
Tel. #828-733-8248

Chatham County DSS  
Tel. #919-542-2759

Beaufort County DSS  
Tel. #252-975-5500

Cherokee County DSS  
Tel. #828-837-7455

Bertie County DSS  
Tel. #252-794-5320

Chowan County DSS  
Tel. # 252-482-7441

Bladen County DSS  
Tel. #910-862-6800

Clay County DSS  
Tel. #828-389-6301

Brunswick County DSS  
Tel. #910-253-2077

Cleveland County DSS  
Tel. #704-487-0661

Buncombe County DSS  
Tel. #828-250-5500

Columbus County DSS  
Tel. #910-642-2800

Burke County DSS  
Tel. #828-439-2000

Craven County DSS  
Tel. #252-636-4900

Cabarrus County DSS  
Tel. #704-920-1400

Cumberland County DSS  
Tel. #910-323-1540

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Currituck County DSS  
Tel. #252-232-3083

Greene County DSS  
Tel. #252-747-5932

Dare County DSS  
Tel. #252-475-5500

Guilford County DSS  
Tel. #336-641-3000

Davidson County DSS  
Tel. #366-242-2500

Halifax County DSS  
Tel. #252-536-2511

Davie County DSS  
Tel. #336-753-6250

Harnett County DSS  
Tel. #910-893-7500

Duplin County DSS  
Tel. #910-296-2200

Haywood County DSS  
Tel. #828-452-6620

Durham County DSS  
Tel. #919-560-8000

Henderson County DSS  
Tel. #828-697-5500

Edgecombe County DSS  
Tel. #252-641-7611

Hertford County DSS  
Tel. #252-358-7830

Rocky Mount Office:  
Tel. #252-985-4101

Hoke County DSS  
Tel. #910-875-8725

Forsyth County DSS  
Tel. #336-703-3400

Hyde County DSS  
Tel. #252-926-4199

Franklin County DSS  
Tel. #919 496-8118

Iredell County DSS  
Tel. #704-873-5631

Gaston County DSS  
Tel. #704-862-7500

Jackson County DSS  
Tel. #828-586-5546

Gates County DSS  
Tel. #252-357-0075

Johnston County DSS  
Tel. #919 989-5300

Graham County DSS  
Tel. #828-479-7911

Jones County DSS  
Tel. #252-448-2581

Granville County DSS  
Tel. #919-693-1511

Lee County DSS  
Tel. #919-718-4690

# **DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children**

Lenoir County DSS  
Tel. #252-559-6400

Lincoln County DSS  
Tel. #704-736-8576

Macon County DSS  
Tel. #828-349-2124

Madison County DSS  
Tel. #828-649-2711

Martin County DSS  
Tel. #252-789-4400

McDowell County DSS  
Tel. #828-652-3355, Ext. 117

Mecklenburg County DSS  
Tel. #704-336-3000

Mitchell County DSS  
Tel. #828-688-2175

Montgomery County DSS  
Tel. #910-576-6531

Moore County DSS  
Tel. #910-947-7367

Nash County DSS  
Tel. #252-459-9818

New Hanover County DSS  
Tel. #910-798-3400

Northampton County DSS  
Tel. #252-534-5811

Onslow County DSS  
Tel. #910-455-4145

Orange County DSS  
Tel. #919-245-2800

Pamlico County Human Services Center  
Tel. #252-745-4086

Pasquotank County DSS  
Tel. #252-338-2126

Pender County DSS  
Tel. #910-259-1240

Perquimans County DSS  
Tel. #252-426-7373

Person County DSS  
Tel. #336-599-8361

Pitt County DSS  
Tel. #252-902-1110

Polk County DSS  
Tel. #828-894-2100

Randolph County DSS  
Tel. #336-683-8000

Richmond County DSS  
Tel. #910-997-8400

Robeson County DSS  
Tel. #910-671-3500

Rockingham County DSS  
Tel. #336-342-1394

Rowan County DSS  
Tel. #704-216-8330

Rutherford County DSS  
Tel. #828-287-6199

# **DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children**

Sampson County DSS  
Tel. #910-592-7131

Wayne County DSS  
Tel. #919-580-4034

Scotland County DSS  
Tel. #910-277-2500

Wilkes County DSS  
Tel. #336-651-7400 or 336-651-7490

Stanly County DSS  
Tel. #704-982-6100

Wilson County DSS  
Tel. #252-206-4000

Stokes County DSS  
Tel. #336-593-2861

Yadkin County DSS  
Tel. #336-679-4210

Surry County DSS  
Tel. #336-401-8700

Yancey County DSS  
Tel. #828-682-6148

Swain County DSS  
Tel. #828-488-6921

Transylvania County DSS  
Tel. #828-884-3174

Tyrell County DSS  
Tel. #252-796-3421

Union County DSS  
Tel. #704-296-4300

Vance County DSS  
Tel. #252-492-5001

Wake County DSS  
Tel. #919-212-7000

Warren County DSS  
Tel. #252-257-5000

Washington County DSS  
Tel. #252-793-4041

Watauga County DSS  
Tel. #828-265-8100

# DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

## Tab – C: Sample Form for Report of Suspected Child Abuse<sup>8</sup>

**Confidential: Keep completed form in locked file**

### **Information Regarding the Person Suspected of Child Abuse:**

Name of suspected abuser: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (home/work/cell): \_\_\_\_\_

Title/relationship to the church (if any):

\_\_\_\_\_

### **Information Regarding Suspected Victim(s):**

Name of suspected victim: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Male/Female: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (home/work/cell): \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to the church: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of any other suspected victim:

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Male/Female: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (home/work/cell): \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to the church: \_\_\_\_\_

*(Continued)*

<sup>8</sup> This sample form is provided as one possible resource. The church should consult with its legal counsel before implementing this specific form and regarding its use and maintenance in specific circumstances.



# **DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children**

***Confidential: Keep completed form in locked file***

## ***Information Regarding Incident(s) of Suspected Child Abuse:***

How did you become suspicious of possible abuse?

Describe any physical evidence of the suspected abuse:

Describe each incidence of suspected sexual abuse, including the type of abuse, date(s), time(s), and location(s) of suspected abuse:

Name any eyewitness to each suspected abuse incident (additional information regarding witnesses is sought below), and describe how that witness viewed the event:

*(Continued)*

# **DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children**

***Confidential: Keep in completed form in locked file***

***Information Regarding Witnesses to Suspected Child Abuse:***

Name of witness: \_\_\_\_\_

Age of witness: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (home/work/cell): \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to the church: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of additional witness: \_\_\_\_\_

Age of witness: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (home/work/cell): \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to the church: \_\_\_\_\_

***Information Regarding Person(s) to Whom Suspected Abuse was Reported:***

Name and title of church official to whom the abuse initially was reported (for example, Sunday School teacher, Rector, etc.):

\_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (home/work/cell): \_\_\_\_\_

Date that initial report was made:

\_\_\_\_\_

Name and title of the person making the initial report to the church official:

\_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (home/work/cell): \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to the church (if any):

\_\_\_\_\_

*(Continued)*

# DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

***Confidential: Keep completed form in locked file***

**Was the suspected abuse reported to Child Protective Services (“CPS”)?**

If yes, state the date the report was made to CPS: \_\_\_\_\_

Name and title of person reporting to CPS: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (home/work/cell): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of CPS worker contacted: \_\_\_\_\_

CPS contact’s telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Was the suspected abuse reported to police?**

If yes, state the date the report was made to police: \_\_\_\_\_

Name and title of person reporting to police: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (home/work/cell): \_\_\_\_\_

Police department and contact person: \_\_\_\_\_

Police contact’s telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Were the parents notified?**

If yes, the date parents were notified: \_\_\_\_\_

Name and title of person notifying parents: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (home/work/cell): \_\_\_\_\_

Parents’ names: \_\_\_\_\_

Parents’ address: \_\_\_\_\_

*(Continued)*

# DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

***Confidential: Keep completed form in locked file***

Parents' telephone (home/work/cell):

\_\_\_\_\_

**Was suspected abuse reported to the Diocese via telephone?**

If yes, the date report was made to the Diocese:

\_\_\_\_\_

Name and title of person reporting to the Diocese:

\_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (home/work/cell): \_\_\_\_\_

Diocese contact person: \_\_\_\_\_

Diocese contact's telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Is a copy of this completed report being sent to the Diocese?**

If yes, state date when report is being sent: \_\_\_\_\_

Name and title of person sending report to the Diocese: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (home/work/cell): \_\_\_\_\_

Diocese contact person to whom report is being sent: \_\_\_\_\_

**Any other information which may be helpful to the investigation:**

*(Continued)*

# **DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children**

***Confidential: Keep completed form in locked file***

***Information Regarding Person Completing this Form:***

Name and title: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (home/work/cell): \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

# DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

## Tab – D: Implementing Ministry Safe

Ministry Safe is an extensive safety system designed to reduce the risk of child sexual abuse in your congregation. Ministry Safe provides on-line child sexual abuse awareness training, has sample policies and procedures that can be tailored to your particular situation, and provides training in skillful screening and guidelines for monitoring and oversight of the program. This program has been endorsed by the Anglican Church in North America and is its **minimum** standard.

### **Cost Involved:**

\$100/year membership

\$5 for each person who successfully passes the test.

### **How Ministry Safe works:**

1. Members have access to an online control panel for their particular congregation. This enables you to monitor all your staff and volunteers who should take the training.
2. The email of each person who is to take the training is entered. A link is automatically sent to that person. This link never expires. A person can view the training video as often as he likes; however, one can only take the test and pass once.
3. Once a person has passed the test, a certificate of completion is automatically sent to the individual and the administrator. The Control panel is automatically updated.
4. Members also have access to resources:
  - ✓ A policy and procedure manual
  - ✓ Sample application forms for volunteers and staff
  - ✓ Sample Interview form
  - ✓ Interview instructions
  - ✓ Description of high- and low-risk responses
  - ✓ Cover letter asking for references
  - ✓ Reference forms for use by mail and for use by telephone

### **Signing up with Ministry Safe**

1. Administrator should go to [www.ministrysafe.com](http://www.ministrysafe.com).
2. Click on “Purchase Options” at the top of the page and follow the instructions. A credit card is needed to join. (\$1.00 will be charged and then credited to make sure the information is valid. The \$100 membership fee will be charged when the first test is successfully completed.)
3. You will be asked to pick a user name and password.
4. Note: If your church is sponsoring a church plant, they can take the training and use the resources through your account. Simply enter them as a separate department.



# **DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children**

## **Suggestions on how to Implement Ministry Safe:**

1. Each congregation should appoint an administrator who will manage users.
2. A committee should also be formed to review the policy and procedure manual and adapt it for your congregation. Check with an attorney to make sure that guidelines and reporting procedures conform to your state.
3. We strongly recommend that churches hold a training session where the group watches the video together before entering their names with MinistrySafe. Please be aware that this video could be traumatic or open old wounds for someone who has experienced abuse and there should be someone present who can give counsel and refer that person for further counseling if needed.
4. The second part of the training session should include going over the policy and procedure manual and discussing how this will be implemented in your church. Everyone should understand these procedures and how they are to be implemented and sign an agreement to that effect.
5. Each individual would then be entered into the Ministry Safe System and receive his own link to the video and test. They may choose to re-watch the video or just go ahead and take the test. The link should be saved as it is always available should the person wish to review it. The test consists of 25 multiple-choice questions.

# DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

## Tab – E: Sample Policy Acknowledgement Form

I certify that I have read (check all that apply):

☐ the \_\_\_\_\_  
(Name of church)  
Prevention of Child Abuse Policy and/or

☐ the Diocesan Policy Manual on the Protection of Children

I further certify that I will abide by the provisions of this policy as long as I am an employee/volunteer of the church.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

## Tab – F: Sample On-Site Supervisory Plan<sup>9</sup>

The following provides an example of a Supervisory Plan for an on-site nursery at a local church. Each church will devise specific supervisory plans for all onsite and offsite programming that involves youth and children.

**Personnel:** Only screened staff and volunteers may work in the nurseries. No one under the age of 18 may be hired to work in the nurseries and no one under the age of 16 may volunteer in the nurseries.

A minimum of two screened and trained staff/volunteers must provide supervision at all times.

Nursery staff and volunteers are not permitted to allow unscreened friends or family members to assist in the nursery.

**Supervision:** On Sunday mornings, either the Nursery Director or the Children's Ministry Director will check to insure that the nurseries are fully staffed at each of the service/Sunday School times. The Nursery Director and Children's Ministry Director will conduct random visits to the nurseries during all programming times or appoint someone else to take on a supervisory role to observe staff/volunteer/child interactions. The Nursery Director will meet with staff to provide training and solve problems.

**Ratio:** No less than one staff/volunteer per five children at any time. Minimum of two staff/volunteers at all times.

**Physical Environment:** Windows on nursery doors will not be obstructed. Toys, books, and furniture and apparatus will be cleaned on a weekly basis. Rugs and other moveable items that could pose danger will be secured.

**Bathroom Procedure:** Children will be escorted to the bathroom in the toddler nursery by female staff and volunteers with one person assisting and another in close proximity.

Diapering will be conducted by female staff/volunteers in the observable diapering areas only.

**Injury/Incident Reporting:** Staff or volunteers will fill out an incident report and advise either the Nursery Director or the Children's Ministry Director when a child is injured or hurt in any way. Incidents of conflict with parents should also be reported in the same manner.

**Reporting Concerns:** Concerns about the nurseries should be reported to the Nursery Director or Children's Ministry Director.

**Release of Children:** Staff or volunteers will release children only to those adults who have corresponding wristband identification with the child.

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<sup>9</sup> This sample form is provided as one possible resource. The church should consult with its legal counsel before implementing this specific form and regarding its use and maintenance in specific circumstances.

# **DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children**

## **Tab – G: Pastoral Response to Known Sexual Offenders**

The church must make every reasonable effort to protect children. Special care must be taken when a church interacts with a person who is registered as a sexual offender, or self-discloses a history of sexual misconduct towards children, or self-discloses a struggle with sexual attraction toward children.

When such a person is known to be a participant in the church or its activities, the clergy shall inhibit that person from any contact with children and shall require (except as otherwise directed by the church's legal counsel) the offender to sign a contract/covenant that details expectations, defines boundaries and off-limits locations (e.g. children's areas, acolyte vesting areas), and establishes appropriate supervision (such as, for example, a bathroom escort) for the offender while on church premises and/or at church activities. The church shall have in place a plan to deal with any violation of the contract/covenant.

If the perpetrator is observed acting in an inappropriate manner with children or their families, the Rector or wardens shall inform the family /families of a potential danger to their child/children (unless otherwise directed by the church's legal counsel). Where appropriate, the Rector or Senior Warden shall consult the offender's probation or parole officer to assure that supervision and reporting requirements have been met.

# **DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children**

## **Tab – H: The Church's Understanding of and Response to an Incident of Abuse**

### **Caring for the Congregation**

Incidents of child abuse, and the secrecy that often surrounds them, can cause devastating harm to the church as well as to the victims. Therefore, where current or past child abuse has been perpetrated by clergy, staff, or volunteers of the church, the church shall provide consultation to encourage the discussion of such incidents and to provide a means to facilitate healing within the church. Tab-I presents one suggested model of how this may be done: a congregational trauma debriefing model.

It is essential that each church respond to a report or instance of abuse or misconduct in a manner that promotes healing for the victim, the offender and the loved ones of both parties, as well as healing within the congregation generally.

Traumatic events have well-documented effects, both immediate and delayed. When a congregation experiences a trauma, the impact is likely to be expressed through symptoms such as:

- Loss of energy or feeling of paralysis
- Distrust of leadership (often projected onto future leadership)
- Divisions within the congregation
- Some group members feeling isolated and withdrawing from the group
- Anger being displaced onto unrelated issues, or blown out of proportion
- A conspiracy of silence about the traumatic event
- Despair about the congregation's future
- Distorting responsibility for the event
- Seeking a "quick fix" without thoughtful reflection
- Difficulty making normal and necessary decisions.

# **DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children**

All of these symptoms could be carried into subsequent years unless the trauma is processed, integrated into the life of the congregation and healed. A useful model for addressing and integrating a trauma is the "debriefing" model drawn from disciplines that do crisis counseling, such as emergency medicine, law enforcement, military science, crisis chaplaincy, and disaster agencies.

A trauma debriefing allows participants to integrate the reality of the event with their own responses to that event. The Church Information, Trauma, and Healing Debriefing Model set forth in Tab I is an effective means to communicate, process, and accept facts, allow feelings to surface, and then, through God's healing grace, head into the future unhindered by the past.



# DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

## **Guiding Principles for Healing in the Church**

The following guidelines outline steps that can be taken to promote healing in the congregation:

### *1) Contact with the family*

Before the process for healing begins, the Bishop or his representative should maintain regular contact with the Complainant(s) and describe to Complainant(s) the procedures to be used for promoting congregational healing.

### *2) Privacy Concerns*

The privacy of the Complainant(s) must be balanced against the need for openness with the local church. Insofar as possible, the identity of the Complainant(s) and any details which may identify him/her should be kept confidential.

### *3) Providing Facts*

The procedures shall take into account that church members usually know when "something is going on, and, in the absence of facts, rumor and speculation will grow.

### *4) Notifying Lay Leadership*

The lay leadership should be advised promptly of the issues, since that group's participation is vital in planning and implementing the processes for church healing.

### *5) Trauma Debriefing*

The healing and unity of a congregation are fostered when there is an open meeting, called a Church Information, Trauma, and Healing Debriefing ("Debriefing"), at which the Bishop or his representative presents as much factual information as possible.

Since the local church will likely include people who have experienced abuse or misconduct themselves, appropriate personnel trained in crisis ministry should be present and available on a small group or one-to-one basis immediately after the formal presentation. Also, local mental health resources (including sliding scale fee agencies) should be publicized so that members of the congregation know how to find these services. (Note that many communities have publicly-funded survivor services, which offer a variety of specialized resources.)

The debriefing generally should follow the process set forth in Tab I. The message should be, "The Church is a place for truth. We follow Jesus, who described himself as the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

# DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

## 6) *Church Spokesperson*

The vestry, in consultation with the clergy, is encouraged to appoint a church spokesperson. The congregation, including church members and staff members, is urged to refer all media inquiries to the church spokesperson.

## 7) *Interim Priest*

If the circumstances require that an interim priest be engaged, that priest should have special training in trauma debriefing. The interim priest should have regular opportunities to report and consult with the Bishop, his designated staff person, and counselors.

## 8) *Consulting Legal Authorities*

Neither the clergy nor any other church worker should attempt to impede persons who wish to consult with legal authorities.

## 9) *Continuing Pastoral Care*

The clergy and/or vestry should consult with the Bishop about additional resources for the healing and care of the congregation.

# DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

## Tab – I: A Model for an Information and Trauma Debriefing Meeting

The following procedures are recommended for the Information and Trauma Debriefing Meeting, but the church and the Bishop should consult in advance with their respective legal counsel (and, if counsel recommends, insurance provider(s)) before conducting such a meeting or undertaking any such actions:

### A. Steps Prior to Meeting

- 1) **Select Leaders.** Carefully choose a Congregational Trauma Debriefing team and a leader or co-leaders who have had experience with a debriefing or trauma-related process. It is important that the Rector or his representative be a visible participant in the debriefing, but not in the role of leadership.
- 2) **Schedule and Notify.** Schedule the debriefing as soon as possible after the complaint becomes public knowledge. Ensure that all members of the congregation and church staff are notified of the debriefing by telephone, e-mail, overnight mail, or other fast and reliable method of notification. It is important to get a wide participation, so that all who experience the trauma also share the Debriefing experience.
- 3) **Choose Meeting Place.** Hold the debriefing in an appropriate place, preferably on the church's property, if there be such. Although an opening prayer is appropriate, this should not be a liturgical event.
- 4) **Address the News Media.** While the debriefing should not be confidential, it is important that no one be placed in jeopardy because of any disclosures made during that meeting. Therefore, it is preferable that the news media not be present for the debriefing, but meet after the debriefing with the church spokesperson and the Bishop.

### B. Agenda for the Meeting

- 1) **Open the Meeting.** The Bishop or his representative should welcome the attendees, as should one of the lay leaders. The lay leader then should introduce himself/herself, explain the debriefing process, and outline the guidelines for the debriefing. It is important to keep the debriefing to the specified procedures. Leaders should be prepared for a lengthy meeting.
- 2) **Present the Facts.** Subject to the advice of counsel, the general facts and approximate chronology of the trauma should be presented verbally, supplemented by written notations such as a summary handout, or by writing notes on newsprint during the factual presentation. The goal is to ensure that all those present have a common record of the traumatic event. Note that this is not a time for feelings to be expressed, and the group may need some direction to withhold those feelings until the next phase of the debriefing.

# DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children

- 3) ***Solicit Reactions.*** Once an appropriate record has been presented, the lay leader should invite church members to express their reactions to the facts. (Some church members may need to be directed to express their own feelings and not those of others.) No feelings, however trivial, intense, or unusual, should be discounted, and no effort should be made to fix, soothe, or smooth them over. The responses simply are to be collected and heard.
- 4) ***Examine Repercussions.*** Once reactions have been expressed fully, the leader should ask those present to turn their attention to the repercussions of the event, and consider the congregation's future. This step bridges the trauma with the ongoing life of those involved in the trauma. It may be a time to explore some of the issues the congregation will face in the near future. As with the presentation of facts, the issues raised may be noted both verbally and with writings.
- 5) ***Seek Context and Perspective*** · Members of the congregation also should be invited to place the event within a context or perspective. There may be expressions of confusion, helplessness, or curiosity about how other groups have resolved an issue of this type. In this phase, people may have an awareness of paradox and pose some hard questions such as the following:
  - Why do bad things happen?
  - How can it be that such a talented priest/leader could be involved in misconduct?
  - Why do things like this happen in a church?
  - Where does the responsibility lie?
  - What about the resources of our faith?

Leaders have discretion whether to respond, or to simply allow others to speak.

## C. Actions After the Meeting

- 1) ***Plan for the Future.*** The final step is planning. This could include a) scheduling a follow-up session one or two months into the future; b) discussing the ways in which the pastoral and sacramental needs of the congregation will be met; or c) describing the resources available to people who may need counseling or other specialized attention.
- 2) ***Provide Trained Counselors.*** For the immediate needs of those present, it is important that trained crisis professionals be available in the church building so that individuals or groups may process their feelings further. These professionals are present simply to listen and support people in integrating the trauma.
- 3) ***Debrief the Debriefing.*** After the debriefing, members of the Congregational Trauma Debriefing Team should meet to discuss their own experiences with the debriefing meeting, in order to do the following:
  - Plan the follow-up monitoring of the congregation in the future
  - Determine whether there are issues that will need further clarification

# **DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children**

- Determine whether there are complicating factors, or factors that require special continuing attention
- Decide what the lay leadership of the congregation requires to address the issue further; and evaluate the debriefing meeting itself (or agree to do so at a later date).

## **Additional Information and Meetings**

If new information comes to light after the first debriefing, further meetings may be held.

Additionally, regular follow-up sessions with the congregation should be held during the first year after disclosure of the incident(s).

## **Additional Church Responses**

Additional appropriate church responses may include:

- Regular prayer for the Complainant(s), the Respondent(s), and the congregation
- Preaching on the subject of violation of trust and liturgical acts of corporate penance
- Securing a safe place for the Complainant(s) and the Complainant's family in community life
- In the event that incarceration or other punitive action follows legal proceedings, developing a means for the congregation to deal appropriately with the person who may be imprisoned.

## **Congregational Follow-up: The First Year**

Even with the best of care, a congregation that has experienced sexual misconduct will likely need an ongoing program of support and assistance, especially in the first year. This year will be devoted to a healing process, in which the congregation slowly will integrate the reality of its experience into its future. If such integration does not take place, the congregation may suffer from prolonged loss of energy, despair about the future, loss and/or isolation of some members, distrust of lay and/or ordained leadership or of the Bishop, and difficulty making decisions or taking risks.

# **DOMA Policy Manual for the Protection of Children**

## **Suggested Follow-up Activities**

Follow-up with the congregation may take any of several forms:

- 1) Meeting With Bishop. A meeting between the Bishop or the Bishop's representative and the vestry in order to assess the healing process of the congregation
- 2) Staff Input. Obtaining input from church staff (including an interim priest where present) about their observations regarding the incident and the Debriefing process
- 3) Study Groups. Establishing study groups to consider the issue of healing from sexual abuse, perhaps by reading a selected book for discussion
- 4) Self-evaluation. Conducting a congregational self-evaluation, through the use of a questionnaire or survey instrument
- 5) Focus Groups. Creating congregational focus groups to address the issue of where the congregation stands in its process of moving ahead
- 6) Committee on Congregational Life. Forming a Committee on Congregational Life charged with assessing the needs and planning programs for continued healing
- 7) Professional Consultant. Appointing a professional consultant experienced with issues of child abuse to work with the vestry and affected congregation on the components of the healing process

## **Using the Trauma to Help Others**

Some churches, having worked through a history of child abuse, take up a special vocation in a related area. Such steps signify that the congregation has moved into the redemptive activity of letting its own pain be a gift for others. Among possible actions:

- ✓ Helping Other Churches. Offering help to other churches confronted with the same issues
- ✓ Sponsoring Programs. Sponsoring seminars or programs on ethics and sexuality
- ✓ Church Building. Offering the church building for use by community groups to address issues of child abuse
- ✓ Developing programs for young people about protecting themselves from abuse