

SAFE-GUARDING OUR CHILDREN

St. Paul's Church

Adopted by Vestry August 23, 2019

Among our primary duties at St. Paul's is to provide a safe place for our children and youth. To further our commitment to this basic principle, well-articulated policies and practices are important in establishing the contours of parish life.

1. **The 'Model Policy for the Protection of Youth Children and Youth' in the Episcopal Church** will be distributed to each Vestry member, all adults working with children, and available to interested parish members. While a small parish in Mexico does not have the resources for background checks and for the implementation of all of the suggested procedures in the Model Policy, it is an important reference offering useful guidelines.
2. **MONITORING AND SUPERVISION OF PROGRAMS:**
 - a. There shall be at least two unrelated adults present at ministry settings and events designed for children and youth. If unanticipated circumstances result in an adult being alone with children or youth, those circumstances shall be reported to the Rector, clergy in charge, Senior Warden or Responsible person ASAP
 - b. Only one adult may be sufficient in well-monitored, visually accessible program space on the church grounds, such as a Sunday School classroom, provided that another adult can maintain visual contact with the adult program leader.
 - c. Adults who work with children and youth are expected to model healthy relationships in all settings. Adults are discouraged from initiating a private relationship with any unrelated child or youth apart from sanctioned church activities.
3. **OFF-SITE PROGRAMMING:**
 - a. Off-site St. Paul's events for children or youth require prior approval of the Rector and Vestry and must adhere to the two-adult policy. At any gathering of children or youth, there shall be at least two unrelated adults.
 - b. Any overnight retreat or event requires registration, waiver and release forms. Confidentiality shall be preserved with respect to medical or other sensitive information on the forms. Such forms can encompass a program year.
 - i. There must be a parent/guardian signature on all release and waiver forms for minors. Permission slips shall be provided for off-site events and shall be signed by a parent/guardian.
 - c. A first-aid kit is encouraged at off-site events.
4. **REPORTING:**
 - a. Any adult with reason to suspect abuse, neglect, or exploitation of children or youth shall report to the Rector or Senior Warden with all haste, and the Rector and Senior Warden. The Rector and Senior Warden will take counsel together. If actionable concerns are determined, this will be shared with the Vestry.

- b. The Rector, Senior Warden and Vestry will adhere to strict confidentiality in reporting matters. Should an actionable event be determined, the Office of the Bishop will be informed and consulted.

5. SOCIAL MEDIA:

- a. All communications with children or youth (generally informational regarding program events) are NOT CONFIDENTIAL and may be shared.
- b. Adults are not to establish private communications with children or youth on social media.
- c. Care should be taken using photos, “tagging” or otherwise identifying children or youth on social media.

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