



ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF SAN JOAQUIN



Guidelines for the Protection of Children and Youth

Abbreviated Guidelines

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A: INTRODUCTION

A.1 Welcome from the Bishop

Greetings and peace to you!

If you are reading this introduction you are a minister in the Anglican Diocese of San Joaquin and considering a ministry among the most vulnerable among us. Your ministry is important and deserves the very best of what we have to offer the Lord.

I am reminded of Jesus' clear encouragement in the gospel of Luke: **"Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the Kingdom of God."** (Lk 18:16)

Jesus also reminds us in Luke that we must approach our ministries with the utmost care; "And he said to his disciples, **'Temptations to sin are sure to come, but woe to the one through whom they come! It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were cast into the sea than that he should cause one of these little ones to sin. Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, "I repent" you must forgive him.'**" (Luke 17:2-4)

Friends, scripture is clear that each and every one of us is created in the image of God and thus we are called to respect and protect all of God's creatures. However, we are also fallen creatures and sinners, and so we are called to be **"wise as serpents and innocent as doves."**

You are involved in this training in order to assist you fulfill your God honoring ministry by honoring the least among us, children and vulnerable adults.

If you are a clergy person your ordinal vows hold you to the highest standard of care and protection. Remembering that you represent Christ and His Church and your actions reflect upon Christ and me as your bishop. You are expected to comport yourself at all times in such a way as to bring the highest honor to the Lord.

If you are a lay person your baptismal vows and confirmation affirmations equally hold you accountable and to the highest standards. For what can be a higher standard than the Great Commandment of Christ? **"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself."** (Mt. 22:37-39)

To all my brothers and sisters active in ministry in the Anglican Diocese of San Joaquin, thank you! Thank you for your care and love for the Lord. Thank you for your desire to serve him and His Church. Thank you for reaching out to those in your congregation and beyond in word and deed with the message of love and peace in Jesus Christ!



The Rt. Rev. Dr. Eric Vawter Menees
Vth Bishop of San Joaquin

A.2 Biblical Foundation for Guidelines

The Anglican Diocese of San Joaquin (ADSJ) 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 essential when caring for our children and youth.

Current statistics regarding child abuse are alarming. 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)

A.3 Purpose of the Guidelines

This document provides guidance, information, instruction, and common practices to direct and inform the clergy and laity in the churches in the ADSJ for the protection of children and youth. It serves as a reference manual to inform your decisions and methods with regard to safeguarding the youth and children entrusted to you, providing minimum standards of care and vigilance.

A.4 The Diocesan Standing Committee's Role

The Bishop, in consultation with the Standing Committee, is responsible for the creation and promulgation of the Diocesan Guidelines for the Protection of Children, in accordance with the canons of the diocese. The Bishop may choose to appoint specific individuals within the diocese to a working group subcommittee to complete specific tasks related to the development or implementation of the Guidelines.

From time to time, but not less than every two years, the committee will review and, if necessary, revise the guidelines in light of practical experiences, medical and other scholarly research, legal developments, and other relevant considerations.

It is also recommended that each diocese and or church ensure they have a Risk Management provider they can consult with as needed. For most churches, their insurance company can be a resource for this. Other churches may, in addition, want to create their own Risk Management Committee. (See Section H, page xv).

A.5 Responsibility for these Guidelines

The Rector:

The rector, rather than the diocese or the Anglican Church in North America, has overall responsibility for the administration of these guidelines within the congregation, mission, or church plant he leads and for providing all reports requested by the diocese. In the absence of a rector, the clergy-in-charge, senior warden, or the appointed church lay leader with oversight from the Bishop will be responsible. Duties may be delegated, except in those areas specifically delineating action by the rector.

The Child Protection Coordinator:

If the congregation is large enough, the rector may have appointed a person to coordinate and implement the various components of these guidelines under his oversight. The ADSJ has entitled this position the “Child Protection Coordinator” but it could be called a “Church Safety Coordinator” or another title in your local church setting. This person could be an assisting clergy member, an administrative pastor, a children’s ministry pastor, a vestry warden, or another lay leader.

Clergy, Employees and Volunteers:

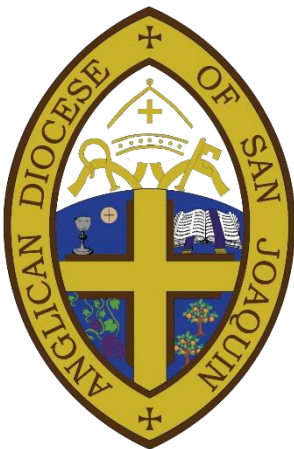
In all matters concerning child and youth protection, staff and volunteers are responsible to the Rector, although the Rector may designate specific responsibilities to the Child Protection Coordinator to assist him. All clergy, employees and warden, and volunteers who work with youth or children must complete all aspects of required trainings and background checks in a timely manner. Details on these are found further on in the Guidelines.

A.6 Pastoral Care of Children

We are also committed to providing pastoral care to all affected by and involved with 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 to minister to each individual as we believe God desires.

Almighty God, heavenly Father, you have blessed us with the joy and care of children: Give us calm strength and patient wisdom as we bring them up, that we may teach them to love whatever is just and true and good, following the example of our Savior Jesus Christ, Amen. (BCP, #66)

A.7 Diocesan Guidelines on Child Abuse: A No-Tolerance Approach



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.

A.8 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. Each state 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 include the following elements (among others):

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

Child Abuse reporting laws specific to each state can be found at <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/state/>

MINIMUM STANDARDS FIVE-STEP APPROACH TO PROTECTING YOUTH



A.9 Minimum Standards

The diocese and your congregation are committed to creating a positive and healthy environment for students through the 5-step approach below. Each congregation, mission, and church plant is expected to have these procedures in place. The first two steps precede your work with children. The last three steps are vital when serving children in your context. Please read carefully for practical guidelines and best practices:

- 1 • Screening
- 2 • Training
- 3 • Interacting
- 4 • Monitoring
- 5 • Responding & Reporting

A.10 Abbreviated Guidelines

FIVE STEPS TO KEEP KIDS SAFE IN THE DIOCESE OF SAN JOAQUIN

1. **SCREENING** is an opportunity to prevent an abuser from ever having contact with children and youth in our programs. Screening tools and practices help ensure that giving care to children and youth are properly suited and adequately trained for their responsibility. Screening of employees and volunteers in youth and children's ministries includes:
 - a. Standard applications for employees and for children and youth ministry volunteers;
 - b. Applicant signature stating the applicant and members of his/her household have never been arrested for or convicted of child abuse or diagnosed with certain psychiatric conditions such as voyeurism or exhibitionism;
 - c. National Sex Offender Registry/Background Check, to be renewed every 3 years. (The MinistrySafe system's Level 1 at minimum, or Level 2 check for those transporting children or youth.)
 - d. Personal and professional reference checks and a social media search;
 - e. Face-to-face interviews;
 - f. Six-month minimum church attendance rule for all volunteers serving in children's and youth ministries.
 - g. For congregations in California: Live scan fingerprinting of all volunteers who work with children or youth more than 16 hours per month or 32 hours per year;
 - h. For congregations in California: Live scan fingerprinting of all clergy, paid staff, vestry wardens, licensed catechists, and anyone doing home visits, regardless of how many hours per month or year they work with children or youth.
2. **TRAINING** is an important deterrent to child abuse and focuses on recognizing inappropriate behaviors and the warning signs of potential abuse and learning the procedures for reporting suspected abuse. Training is essential in identifying the warning signs of abuse. Less than 10 percent of all child sex abusers enter the judicial system. The key to identifying abuse is by the grooming behaviors that abusers utilize to gain the trust of the children they target and the gatekeepers who are in authority.
 - a. Reading and Acknowledgement
All members of the clergy, vestry wardens, staff members, licensed catechists, anyone doing home visits, and volunteers who work with children must certify that they have read, understood and accepted these guidelines on the protection of children and submit their signed form to the church.
 - b. Abuse Awareness Training
Every three years clergy, vestry wardens, staff, licensed catechists, anyone doing home visits, and volunteers who have contact with youth and children must complete the MinistrySafe Sexual Abuse Awareness Training assigned by your church, or provide certification of a comparable training approved by the diocese.
 - c. Guidelines Training
Every three years all groups listed above must attend a training through the church that reviews the Child Protection guidelines and answers questions.

3. **GUIDELINES FOR INTERACTION** help children and adults feel safe in ministry and help detect problems before they turn into an incident of abuse. Verbal interactions between clergy, staff members, or volunteers and children should be positive, constructive and encouraging. 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.

Social media communication between a youth or clergy, volunteer, or staff member is to be limited to occurring on the official page of the church or ministry. If a youth contacts a staff person or volunteer directly via private message or on a private page, redirect them to the appropriate avenue for the conversation to take place and inform their parents so they are aware of the communication.

Photos of children will not be used contrary to the wishes of parent(s). The ADSJ and its churches will refrain from posting any personally identifying information about children pictured online or in print publications without prior permission from parent(s).

Children's staff members and volunteers are responsible for protecting children under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch.

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

Appropriate interactions may include:

- Smiles
- Encouragement and verbal praise
- Handshakes and high fives
- Fist bumps
- Thumbs up
- Side to side hugs
- Pats on the shoulder or back
- Arm around the shoulder
- Holding hands while walking with small children
- Sitting beside small children
- Holding hands during prayer
- Holding or picking up children who are 4 years old and younger
- Kneeling or bending down for hugs with small children

Inappropriate interactions include:

- Spanking, slapping, or any form of physical discipline
- Shaming or belittling a child or youth
- Meeting alone in non-public or isolated places
- Swearing in the presence of children
- Engaging in sexually oriented communications with or in proximity to children
- Using, possessing, or being under the influence of tobacco products, alcohol, or any illegal drugs when in the presence of children
- Wrestling
- Tickling
- Piggyback rides
- Sitting in laps (except for nursery-aged children)
- Kissing on the lips
- Full frontal hugs or "bear hugs"
- Commenting on children's bodies

- Forcing unwanted affection
- Being nude in front of children (such as on overnight trips, changing at pool parties, etc.)
- Contacting or “friending” a child or youth social networking sites without the parent’s permission
- Showing favoritism or possessiveness
- Calling, emailing, or texting too often (singling a child out – “grooming” a child)
- Giving gifts to children without the parent’s permission
- Private meals with children or youth.
- Ridiculing the beliefs of a child or youth or those of their parents
- Allowing a child or youth to do things against the wishes of the parents
- Offering children or youth cigarettes, alcohol, or drugs
- Allowing children or youth to view pornography or to visit inappropriate internet sites
- Asking a child or youth to keep “secrets” from his or her parents
- Wearing provocative or revealing attire
- Taking pictures while children are dressing or showering
- Snapping bras or giving “wedgies” or similar touch of underwear, whether covered by other clothing or not

4. **MONITORING** allows us to detect problems before they turn into an incident of abuse and helps adults avoid wrongful allegations of abuse when 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.

Our monitoring practices include the following:

- **TWO ADULT RULE:** All children and youth activities shall be designed to be supervised by two or more screened and trained individuals at all times;
- **SUPERVISORY PLANS:** An onsite or offsite written Supervisory Plan shall be in place for all educational, pastoral, recreational, or other programming that involves youth or children. (See section G.3 in the expanded version of the Child Protection Guidelines for details.) Those tasked with supervising youth or children for a specific program must review and sign a copy of the specific supervisory plan;
- No child or youth will ever be left unattended during, or following, a church activity;
- Clergy, staff members, and volunteers should not conduct unobserved meetings or interactions with children or youth;
- In a discipleship or mentoring relationship, the interactions should occur in a public place or where other persons are present;
- Everyone is tasked with watching for, and responding to, guidelines 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 to ensure they will accommodate these guidelines;
- Keeping interaction with children in full view of others at all times;
- Keeping unused rooms locked;
- Keeping children and youth in supervised areas.

The following restroom policy will be in effect during all children's programming:

- Children who require diapering will be assisted by screened and trained nursery workers or the child's parent or legal guardian.
- Children who are special needs or nursery aged and being potty-trained will be assisted by screened and trained nursery workers or the child's parent or legal guardian. Do not force any child to potty train. Leave the stall door partially open when you are assisting a child in bathrooms, and handle "accidents" by reassuring the child and completing the changing of diapers or underwear and clothing.
- Elementary aged children should receive the minimum amount of assistance needed based on their individual capabilities. Take steps to avoid being alone with one child in the restroom. If another worker is not available, go to the exterior bathroom door, knock and ask if the child requires assistance. If so, leave the exterior door open while you enter the restroom area, standing outside of the stall and verbally assist the child.

When children are present in the sanctuary, parent(s) are expected to accompany their elementary aged child to the restroom or send them with an older sibling; ***we ask this knowing that restrooms are often the most likely place for abuse to occur in an institutional setting.***

5. **RESPONDING** quickly gives us the power to prevent or stop abuse and gives the child more time to heal.

If a child discloses abuse, remember to:

- Respect the child's privacy by finding a private, non-threatening place to talk and ask a staff member or trained volunteer to join in listening to the child or youth's account to ensure the two-adult rule;
- Keep calm, listen and avoid expressing shock or outrage;
- Let the child or youth know that he or she is believed;
- Assure the child or youth that the abuse was not his or her fault;
- Tell the child or youth, if helpful, that they were brave to disclose;
- Avoid questions that could make the child or youth feel responsible or plant ideas that could taint their recollection and account; child victims are often vague in their initial disclosure;
- Write down as accurately as possible what the child or youth disclosed; this information can be used in filing the Report of Suspected Abuse Form for the diocese and the Child Protective Services report if warranted;
- Respect confidentiality: be careful afterwards not to discuss the information with, or in front of, other people who do not need to know what happened. Limited discussion about the information to appropriate church and legal authorities.

Do not ignore or fail to take seriously any reported incident. Reporting requirements for suspected child abuse and neglect include two separate authorities with different requirements: 1) reporting within the church, and 2) reporting to legal authorities.

- As an initial matter, promptly report every suspected incident of child abuse or neglect to your Rector and the Child Protection Coordinator (or designee). The Rector will inform the Bishop. In the case the Rector is suspected, report directly to the Bishop.
- Each state defines who is required to report to legal authorities. For example, in California, clergy and church staff are mandated reporters, but volunteers are not. This means that in California, clergy and staff must report any suspected case of child abuse directly to the county Child Protective Services or the county Sheriff's Office. Volunteers may also make a report directly to the legal authorities in addition to immediately notifying your Rector and the Child Protection Coordinator (or designee); in the case the Rector is suspected, notifying the Bishop.
- Some states have timeframes within which reporting must occur. In California, reports to legal authorities must be made immediately, or as soon as practically possible, by phone. A written report must then be forwarded within 36 hours of receiving the information regarding the incident. The written report must be submitted on a Department of Justice form (SS 8572), available at https://oag.ca.gov/sites/all/files/agweb/pdfs/childabuse/ss_8572.pdf and on the diocesan website. Check your state for the proper form and reporting authorities.

You must promptly report to the Rector, or the Child Protection Coordinator or designee, whenever you:

- Are involved in or become aware of any sexually-oriented communications involving a child connected with the church; or
- Are involved in or become aware of any inappropriate behavior involving a child by the Rector (report to the Bishop in this case), a staff member, or a volunteer; or
- Are arrested for, or convicted of, any crime involving child abuse and/or neglect, are charged with child sexual abuse in a civil proceeding; commit an act of child sexual abuse; or (except as otherwise prohibited or limited by applicable laws and regulations) are diagnosed with any paraphilic psychological condition, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, including, but not limited to, pedophilia, voyeurism or exhibitionism, or
- If any of these apply to any adult living in your household.

Remember to:

- Endeavor to ensure the safety of the child;
- Report the abuse allegation to church authorities;
- Report to Legal Authorities in accordance with applicable laws.