



THE DIOCESE OF
**CHURCHES
FOR THE SAKE
OF OTHERS**



IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN & YOUTH IN LOCAL CONGREGATIONS

Revised June 2023



Thank you for your leadership in implementing this important aspect of ministry within your congregations. Serving children and youth helps disciple whole families and plays a vital role in intellectual, social, spiritual and physical development.

This Implementation Guide is the cumulative result of the wisdom of experts in this field, including legal counsel and children and youth ministry directors. To ensure you are equipped to implement this policy, please carefully review this document, which describes best practices and requirements for protecting children and youth in the churches and ministries of The Diocese of Churches for the Sake of Others (“C4SO” or “the Diocese”). These guidelines are intended to foster a healthy and nurturing environment in which students can grow in relationship with Jesus Christ.

As explained in APPENDIX I in the policy manuals for children and youth, the reasons for protection policies are, unfortunately, numerous. Child abuse is consistently one of the primary reasons for litigation against churches. Since it is impossible to identify a potential abuser by sight, the Church must intentionally provide our children and youth with boundaries that will protect and nurture them. As you implement these policies in your churches, you are on the front lines of defense in protecting children.

Please read this Implementation Guide carefully. In addition to the requirements of your state and the terms and conditions set forth by your church’s insurance carrier regarding sexual misconduct, you must follow the requirements stated herein.

- You are responsible for reviewing the compliance requirements and working locally with leadership towards compliance.
- You’ll verify your congregation’s compliance by completing an online compliance form during the month of September.

The bishop or Executive Leadership Committee may grant variances to specific provisions of the policy, with the advice and counsel of the Chancellor of the Diocese. To apply for a variance, please contact the Diocesan office at admin@c4so.org.

We are so grateful for your ministry. While this is a lot of information to absorb, the application of these sound practices provides protection for those most vulnerable in your congregation. Thank you.

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GUIDING VALUES FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

A SPIRITUAL MANDATE

As the Body of Christ, we have a spiritual mandate to protect those most vulnerable. Our guiding values – love, respect, admiration and reverence – form the foundation for protecting children and youth. We outline these guiding values in both policies.

Christians believe that human beings are created in the image of God, that we are called to be stewards of creation and that God values sexuality as good, blessed and purposeful. Our God-given nature invites us to the responsible fulfillment of our sexuality. Those who work and minister in Christ's name must model God's trustworthiness.

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 children and youth is a sacred trust immersed in our guiding values as we live out the spiritual mandate embodied by these policies.

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)

A NO-TOLERANCE DIOCESAN APPROACH

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. That commitment extends to sexual and physical behavior. C4SO will not tolerate any form of abuse involving clergy, lay employees, volunteers or other persons. In addition, because the safety of children is of the highest importance, those who have a civil or criminal record of child abuse are unable to serve as volunteers in a youth program.



ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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 senior warden is responsible. Duties may be delegated, except in those areas specifically requiring action by the rector.

Ministry Supervisor:

Is responsible to partner with the congregation coordinator to enforce these policies as set forth in the C4SO Youth Protection Policy.

The Congregation Coordinator:

Oversees local implementation of children and youth protection disciplines per this Implementation Guide. The congregation coordinator may be the rector or a designee. Larger churches may have multiple people overseeing different departments within the congregation, while smaller churches may have one person responsible for all child and youth programs.

The Volunteer/Employee:

Is responsible for complying with and acting upon the policies for the protection of children and youth. In all matters concerning children and youth, the volunteer is responsible to the congregation coordinator or rector, if not the same person.

DEFINING CHILD ABUSE

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.

Please refer to the "Report Suspected Sexual Abuse of a Child" page at www.c4so.org/safe-church-training/report-child-abuse. In general, the definitions of "child abuse" and "child neglect" in all states in our Diocese include the following elements (among others):



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

For specific definitions of child abuse and reporting procedures in your state, review the state law sheets at www.c4so.org/safe-church-training/report-child-abuse. These sheets are reviewed annually.



In implementing these policies, your congregation creates a positive and healthy environment for students through a five-step approach:

1. Screening
2. Training
3. Interacting
4. Monitoring
5. Responding and Reporting

Please read carefully for practical guidelines and best practices. As the one implementing this in your local congregation, your knowledge, commitment and participation are invaluable to this process—we couldn't do it without you!



STEP 1: SCREENING

One effective way to reduce the incidence of child abuse is carefully screening all clergy, licensed ministers and volunteers working in youth and children's ministries.

DIOCESAN OFFICE

The Diocesan office oversees the screening of clergy and licensed ministers and is responsible for maintaining clergy and licensed minister files indefinitely. When congregations hire rectors, the Diocese is responsible for ordering and receiving full Oxford Document Management ("ODM") background checks. Any results causing concern will be shared with the vestry and/or search committee in a confidential and timely manner. The Diocesan office complies with ODM and any applicable insurance carrier terms and conditions.

Your church is responsible for the cost of background checks for your respective clergy and ministers.

The Diocese uses the following tools:

- Appropriate Application (Ordination, License, or Transfer)
- 10-year Reference Check*
- Screening Questionnaire*
- ODM background check* includes: National Criminal and Sex Offender Check, Credit Check and Motor Vehicle Search
- Completion of Sexual Abuse Awareness Training*
- For transfers: C4SO requires clergy files from sending diocese, including psychological evaluation, or the applicant for transfer must provide new psychological evaluation

*Documents may be sent to the diocese if they are dated within the past two years.

To ensure consistency of standards and attention, every five years the Diocese orders a five-year ODM background check and requires the completion of the C4SO five-year screening questionnaire from clergy and licensed ministers in active ministry within the Diocese.



STEP 1: SCREENING (CONT.)

CHURCHES

Churches like yours are responsible for appropriate screening and background checks for all employees and those volunteers who work with children in their respective congregations. Churches should understand and comply with terms and conditions established by their insurance carriers in addition to any state requirements.

SCREENING EMPLOYEES, INTERNS, FELLOWS, DAY CAMP STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Churches are responsible for screening their respective employees, interns, fellows, day camp staff and volunteers. These records are to be stored indefinitely in a secured and restricted location. Churches may use the background check provider of their choice, except California churches, as they are required to use Livescan as of 2022.

SCREENING CANDIDATES FOR EMPLOYMENT 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 every two years at a minimum
- Conducting personal and professional reference checks. Seek a wide variety of references, including work references. Individuals with a background as sex offenders often know others with the same history who will give deceptively good references. Therefore, seek references that go beyond personal friends. Every reference must be checked and documented
- Conducting face-to-face interviews
- Requiring completion of a screening form. Among other questions, each applicant must state in writing whether the applicant or other members of his or her household have been arrested for, or convicted of, any crime involving child abuse or neglect, or had any such conviction expunged; have been charged with child sexual abuse in a civil proceeding; have 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 paraphilic psychological condition, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, including, but not limited to, pedophilia, voyeurism, or exhibitionism. A sample form of the "Screening Statement for Employees/Volunteers" is included in this Implementation Guide.

STEP 1: SCREENING (CONT.)

SCREENING VOLUNTEERS INCLUDES:

In addition to fulfilling the above requirements, volunteers must do their best to comply with a six-month minimum attendance rule, except where the bishop has granted a variance. The minimum attendance rule is helpful in getting to know the volunteer. However, for many potential volunteers with a sex crime past, a six-month wait is not a discouragement. Don't let your guard down because a volunteer meets this requirement.

STEP 2: TRAINING

Child Protection Training for clergy, lay ministers, employees and volunteers is an essential part of deterring child abuse. The Diocese provides sexual abuse awareness training through MinistrySafe (www.MinistrySafe.com) at no cost to C4SO churches or trainees. It is an extensive safety system designed to reduce the risk of child sexual abuse in your congregation. MinistrySafe is comprised of video training with a follow-up quiz. Those from your church who need to receive training can complete MinistrySafe training online at their convenience around their own schedules.

All clergy, employees and volunteers who have contact with children and youth must complete this training before they begin ministry in the congregation. Clergy, church staff and those volunteers working with children must renew their training every two years. Vestry members and parents may also complete the training as part of locally-driven child protection requirements.

Please note: C4SO uses MinistrySafe for training only. C4SO does not use the background checks service in MinistrySafe. Churches may use the background check provider of their choice as long as it includes checking the National Sexual Offender Registry and criminal records. In California, it must include using Livescan as part of the process (effective 2021).

- When a California church applies to the Department of Justice to be able to run LiveScans, the church can sign up to receive subsequent arrest notifications by filling out the "Contract



STEP 2: TRAINING (CONT.)

For Subsequent Arrest Notification Service” form. The church will then receive notice of any future arrests of their volunteers.

- Once a childcare worker has been fingerprinted, he or she remains active until the church submits a “No Longer Interested (NLI) Request.” According to the Department of Justice, it is not necessary to be re-printed yearly to meet California level of service. As of 2023, the Federal Rap Back Service is unavailable for FBI level of service.

THE MINISTRYSAFE PROCESS

1. The diocesan administrator will deploy MinistrySafe training emails, which include personalized training links.
2. People who need to receive training simply click on the link in the email, view the training and take the test. They can view the training videos as often as desired but can only take the test and pass once.
3. A passing score is 70%. Upon passing the MinistrySafe test, each person receives a certificate of completion (automatically deployed by MinistrySafe).
4. MinistrySafe automatically updates each person’s training status and records the date of completion in the person’s profile.
5. The congregation coordinator is responsible for managing the training status for their congregation’s clergy, licensed lay ministers, employees and volunteers who work with children and/or youth. The coordinator is most familiar with local training needs.
6. If a church is using a different program than MinistrySafe, the congregation coordinator is responsible for verifying completion, tracking status and providing documentation to the diocesan administrator.
7. The diocesan administrator provides guidance to coordinators and is responsible for document management at the Diocesan office.

NOTE:

Please be aware that sexual abuse awareness training can be traumatic and/or open old wounds for those who have experienced abuse. Please have someone present who can give counsel and refer those needing help for further counseling, if needed.



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STEP 3: INTERACTING

The companion **C4SO Child Protection Policy** includes a thorough list of guidelines for interacting with children within these categories: Communication, Sexually-Oriented Materials, Social Media, Photography, Physical Interaction, Drugs and Alcohol, Restroom Use, First Aid and Medication, the Release of Children and Transportation.

The companion **C4SO Youth Protection Policy** includes a thorough list of guidelines for those ministering to youth within these categories: physical interacting, physical privacy, one-to-one interactions with youth, sleeping arrangements, illegal drugs, transportation, verbal interactions, sexually-oriented conversations, sexually-oriented materials, photography, social media and parental contact/involvement.

Please refer to these documents for age-specific policies.

STEP 4: MONITORING

STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Maintaining an ongoing child-safe environment includes always having two approved and trained adults present wherever there are children and youth. Clergy and staff supervisors must continually evaluate those who work with children and youth. It's often helpful to have casual conversations with volunteers on how they would handle difficult situations, checking to see if they are internalizing the church's commitment to safety. Where weaknesses are observed, address the problems promptly.

FACILITIES

Church clergy and staff must also monitor the facilities. The facility should be made safe before children, students or volunteers arrive. Do not place volunteers in situations that are impossible to manage. In order to monitor what is happening in each room, make sure the door is open,



STEP 3: MONITORING (CONT.)

or that the activities taking place inside are visible from outside the room. While this is easy to arrange in a dedicated church facility, it can be a challenge in shared facilities.

MEETINGS IN HOMES

Meetings in homes create a complex environment for assuring the safety of children and youth. There are three types of activities involving church members in homes:

- 1. Private events** take place when members of the congregation meet in the home of a member or regular attendee with no sponsorship by the congregation's leadership. In the community life of the church, individuals often develop friendships that lead to social or spiritual gatherings in homes, generally without the knowledge of the church. This is normal and expected. The congregation's leadership does not have a role in oversight of activities of this type. Congregational leadership may become aware of these events and even be invited to them. However, gatherings initiated by congregation members themselves are not church events and it would be intrusive for the church to attempt to institute controls. But if church leaders are aware of risks in these situations (such as a sex-offender participating in a social setting where children and/or youth are playing in another room), that matter should be discussed with the rector to see if informal advice should be given to the host.
- 2. General events in homes** take place when the congregation conducts its activities in the homes of its members. These are very typical of smaller churches and obviously, house churches. In those instances where a congregational event takes place in a home, the same principles of protection apply as to any event that is held in a dedicated church space. That is, if a church event takes place in the home and children and/or youth are present, all the requirements of screening, training, interacting, monitoring and responding must be applied. Every event is required to have the appropriate childcare for all functions. Depending on the function and the size of the church and their Children's Department, it may be appropriate for the church to provide properly staffed childcare at the church during the event. All church-sponsored events in homes, even small groups, must adhere to the two adults rule for managing groups of children and youth. The best practice is to keep children segregated by age group with two adults overseeing each group. Volunteer childcare workers for small groups should be adults and must be screened and trained as any other volunteer. The risk of injury and



STEP 3: MONITORING (CONT.)

molestation increases if adolescents are used as volunteer childcare workers. Parents may want to take turns supervising the children. Homes must be inspected for any dangerous conditions such as toxins or other dangerous substances prior to children and youth arriving. Individual members of the small group should check in on the children and youth throughout the evening. Older children should be encouraged to report any inappropriate behavior they observe. Children should not be allowed to wander to the restrooms alone. The best practice is to contact the parent of the child and have them escort the child to the restroom.

Make sure that the person making the announcements at your church, whether written or verbal, clearly communicates which events are private and which are church-sponsored. For example, “Mr. and Mrs. X are hosting an event at their home” gives the message that this is a private event.

On the other hand, “The church is holding an event at the home of Mr. and Mrs. X. Childcare is being provided by the church” gives the message that this is a church-sponsored event. In conversations with members who may be asking about the events, staff and church leaders must carefully maintain the distinction about church events vs. private events and not treat them interchangeably. For example, when someone emails or calls the office about a private event and asks, “When is the church event at the Joneses?”, the reply should be, “Oh, that is the Jones’ event, but I can give you the time and address, as well as Mrs. Jones’ phone number, if you would like to call her for more information.”

Even in gatherings in the homes of parents, church leadership should be sensitized to risks and take active steps for child and youth protection when they see risk-inducing situations. For example:

- Meetings should never take place in homes where the hosts are sex-offenders or behave inappropriately, even if they are parents.
- If the home or its yard is large, children and youth who are guests should not be allowed to gather far from the adults in a manner that makes it difficult for parents to spontaneously check in.
- No matter the size of the gathering you must have two screened and trained adults overseeing



STEP 3: MONITORING (CONT.)

the children and youth.

- Parents who are likely to have multiple church events in their home where children and youth are present should receive the sexual abuse awareness training required of children and youth workers. The congregation coordinator should discuss with the host parents the specific risks that may be at issue in their homes.

SUPERVISORY PLANS FOR CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH MINISTRY

For those working with children and youth, a written Supervisory Plan is a helpful tool to give clear direction to staff and volunteers and provide objective criteria to monitor an onsite or off-site event or activity. When all staff for an onsite or off-site event or activity are informed about the Supervisory Plan, it helps maintain Diocesan standards in the area of child protection and may prevent inadvertent missteps. We recommend posting Supervisory Plans in a visible location at the event or activity. Congregation coordinators must keep these Supervisory Plans on file.

SAMPLE ONSITE SUPERVISORY PLAN:

- 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 recommended ratio of adults to children:
 - Infants: Two (2) adults for up to eight (8); one (1) additional adult for every additional one (1) to four (4) infants
 - Young toddlers: Two (2) adults for up to ten (10); one (1) additional adult for every additional one (1) to five (5) toddlers
 - 2 and 3 years: Two (2) adults for up to sixteen (16); one (1) additional adult for every additional one (1) to eight (8) 2-to-3-year-olds
 - 4 years: Two (2) adults for up to twenty (20); one (1) additional adult for every additional one (1) to ten (10) 4-year-olds
 - School age: Two (2) adults for up to thirty-six (36); one (1) additional adult for every additional one (1) to eighteen (18) school-age child
 - Mixed age group: ratio for the youngest child in the group



STEP 4: MONITORING (CONT.)

- The physical environment
- Bathroom procedures
- First aid and medication procedures
- The reporting of discipline concerns
- The release of children and youth after the event/activity

SAMPLE OFF-SITE SUPERVISORY PLAN

- 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 recommended ratio of adults to children/youth
- The physical environment
- Bathroom procedures
- The release of children
- First aid and medication procedures
- The reporting of discipline concerns
- Offsite transportation plan
- Dining arrangements
- Sleeping arrangements
- Showering arrangements

Note: Staff members and volunteers should never be nude in the presence of children and/or youth in their care. In the event there is a situation that may call for changing clothes or an overnight change into pajamas, the rector or ministry supervisor will detail procedures for showering or changing clothes.



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STEP 5: RESPONDING AND REPORTING

REPORTING

Follow C4SO's Protocol

The first step in the reporting process is to call the Diocesan Ombudsman, Kimberly Pfeiler (469-766-1272) within 24 hours of becoming aware of the incident. If you are unable to make contact with the Ombudsman in 24 hours, call (615-968-5348) and email (admin@c4so.org) the diocesan office for assistance in connecting with her. Follow the guidance given by the Ombudsman, which may include mandatory state reporting and notifying the Rector, who will then notify relevant local persons.

- **Report to the Diocesan Ombudsman (see above).**
- **Suspend Person Accused of Abuse from Duties.** If the person accused of abuse is employed by or volunteering with the church, the rector (or 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 and/or youth. This can be done quietly and discreetly, but should be done quickly and without exception. An interim transfer to a position that has no contact with children and/or youth 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 parent or guardian or otherwise a member of the household, the rector or his designee should contact the parents or appropriate guardians and offer support from the church.
- **Notify the Bishop.** The rector must notify the bishop and/or his staff. The bishop will 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.

STEP 5: RESPONDING AND REPORTING (CONT.)

REPORTING TO LEGAL AUTHORITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH STATE LAWS¹

Every church must be aware of and comply with state laws when it comes to reporting suspected child abuse and neglect. Even when 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.

The Ombudsman may recommend that a report is legally required or decides that it should make a permissive report even though one is not legally required.

Consider these guidelines to reporting suspected child abuse and neglect.

- **Cooperate with Investigating Legal Authorities.** Subject to advice of your church's legal counsel, always 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 your church's legal counsel and/or insurance carrier policy directs otherwise, the church should promptly notify its liability insurance company. This is important for 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 abuse situations, which is why the congregation coordinator must verify that the church is covered for sexual misconduct.
- **Appropriately Document Actions.** Designated clergy must 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.) 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.



STEP 5: RESPONDING AND REPORTING (CONT.)

RESPONDING

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.

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 applicable.

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.

Carefully Consider Any Release of Information. Identify a single person as the church spokesperson to respond to all inquiries (media or otherwise) 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. Do not release any information until the church has solidly confirmed its factual content.



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STEP 5: RESPONDING AND REPORTING (CONT.)

Bring Closure to the Investigation. If the accused is eventually convicted, then counseling, discipline and/or dismissal is 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.



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PASTORAL RESPONSE TO KNOWN SEXUAL OFFENDERS

The church must make every reasonable effort to protect those in its care. 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/youth, or self-discloses a struggle with sexual attraction toward children/youth.

When such a person is known to be a participant in the church or its activities, the clergy must inhibit that person from any contact with children and/or youth and 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 must have in place a plan to deal with any violation of the contract/covenant. See Recommended Policies for Sex Offenders in C4SO Congregations on the Professional Development for Clergy Webpage.

If the perpetrator is observed acting in an inappropriate manner with children/youth or their families, the rector or wardens must 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 must consult the offender's probation or parole officer to assure that supervision and reporting requirements have been met.



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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 must encourage discussion of the incident and provide a means to facilitate healing within the church. At the end of this manual, we've provided one model of how this may be done: The Church Information, Trauma and Healing Debriefing Model. A trauma debriefing allows participants to integrate the reality of the event with their own responses to that event. It 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.

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.



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.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR HEALING IN THE CHURCH

The following steps may help to promote healing in the congregation:

- 1. Contact the family.**

Before the process for healing begins, the bishop or his representative should maintain regular contact with the victim and the victim’s family, sharing the procedures to be used for promoting congregational healing.

- 2. Balance privacy and openness.**

Balance the privacy of both the victim and offender against the need for openness with the local church. As much as possible, keep the identities confidential.

- 3. Provide facts.**

Church members usually know when “something is going on,” and, in the absence of facts, rumor and speculation will grow.

- 4. Notify 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. Conduct trauma debriefing.**

The possibility of healing and unity in a congregation grows 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. After the meeting, ask a person trained in crisis ministry to be available on a small group or one-to-one basis. Make available local mental health resources (including sliding scale fee agencies) so that people know how to find these services. (Note: Many communities have publicly-funded survivor services, which offer a variety of specialized resources.)

- 6. Your debriefing message** should be “The Church is a place for truth. We follow Jesus, who described himself as the Way, the Truth and the Life.”

- 7. Appoint a church spokesperson.**

The vestry, in consultation with the clergy, may appoint a church spokesperson. The congregation, including church members and staff members, then refers all media inquiries



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to the church spokesperson.

8. Find an interim priest, if needed.

If the circumstances require that an interim priest be engaged, make sure the priest has special training in trauma debriefing. Arrange for the interim priest to have regular opportunities to report and consult with the bishop, his designated staff person and counselors.

9. Encourage consulting of legal authorities.

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

10. Offer continuing pastoral care.

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



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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 (or his designee) 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. 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 afterwards with the church spokesperson and the bishop.



B. Agenda for the Meeting

1. Open the Meeting. The bishop or his representative should welcome 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. The goal is to ensure that all those present have a common record of the traumatic event. Note: 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.
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. 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
 - Determine whether there are complicating factors, or factors that require special, ongoing 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).

D. 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).

E. Additional Church Responses

Additional appropriate church responses may include:

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

F. 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.

G. Suggested Follow-up Activities

1. Meeting with bishop or his appointed 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

H. Using the Trauma to Help Others

- Some churches, having worked through an incident 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 children and youth about protecting themselves from abuse



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FORMS

On the following pages are forms that can be used to carry out the Child and Youth Protection Program. These are generalized forms designed for all the states in our Diocese. The law in the area of child abuse prevention changes regularly and there may be individual state distinctions. The Diocese updates the law for each state on an bi-annual basis.



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C4SO WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY

If you see something, say something!

Whistleblower Policies are meant to provide a way for an organization's employees or volunteers who observe or experience wrongdoing to be empowered to report it. C4SO's Whistleblower Policy provides important information for any persons outlined below who believe that illegal or unethical practices are taking place within C4SO to report such observations.

A. Application. This Whistleblower Protection Policy applies to all of the Diocese of Churches for the Sake of Others' (the Organization's) staff, whether full-time, part-time, or temporary employees, to all volunteers, to all who provide contract services, and to all officers and directors, each of whom shall be entitled to protection ("protected persons").

B. Reporting Credible Information. A protected person shall be encouraged to report information relating to illegal practices or violations of policies of the Organization (a "Violation") that such person ("the reporter") in good faith has reasonable cause to believe is credible. A violation constitutes breaking a state or federal statute, noncompliance with a state or federal rule or regulation, or unsafe working conditions or work practices in the employee's or volunteer's work/volunteer environment.

Bishop Todd Hunter has appointed the Rev. Canon Kimberley Pfeiler as Ombudsman for the Organization. Anyone in a C4SO church must report a Violation to the Diocesan Ombudsman (469-766-1272) within 24 hours of becoming aware of the incident. The Diocesan Ombudsman is the reporter's first point of contact. If the reporter is unable to make contact with the Ombudsman in 24 hours, they must call (615-968-5348) and email (admin@c4so.org) the diocesan office for assistance in connecting with her.

Upon speaking with the reporter, the Ombudsman will ask the reporter to complete a Whistleblower Reporting Form, available on the Safe Church Training portion of the Organization's website, to document as much information about the Violation as possible. The Ombudsman will also guide the reporter to next steps, which may include



state reporting and notifying the Rector, who will then notify relevant local persons. Anyone reporting a Violation must act in good faith, and have reasonable grounds for believing that the information shared in the report indicates that a Violation has occurred.

C. Confidentiality. Reports of Violations or suspected Violations will be kept confidential to the extent possible, with the understanding that confidentiality may not be maintained where identification is required by law or in order to enable the Organization or law enforcement to conduct an adequate investigation.

D. Protection from Retaliation. No person entitled to protection shall be subjected to retaliation, intimidation, harassment, or other adverse action for reporting information in accordance with this Policy. Any person entitled to protection who believes that he or she is the subject of any form of retaliation for such participation should immediately report the same as a violation of and in accordance with this Policy. Any individual within the Organization who retaliates against another individual who has reported a Violation in good faith or who, in good faith, has cooperated in the investigation of a Violation is subject to discipline, including termination of employment or volunteer status.

E. Dissemination and Implementation of Policy. This Policy shall be disseminated in writing to all affected constituencies. The Organization shall implement this Policy by asking each constituency to take the following steps:

- (1) Report all violations to the Diocesan Ombudsman (469-766-1272) within 24 hours of becoming aware of the incident.
- (2) Complete a Whistleblower Reporting Form, available on the Organization's website.
- (3) If recommended by the Diocesan Ombudsman, work with legal counsel to discuss further proceedings involving the reported Violation.

The procedures for implementation of this Policy shall include the Diocesan Ombudsman communicating with the reporter about the status of the reported Violation, to the extent that the reporter's identity is disclosed, and to the extent consistent with any



privacy or confidentiality limitations. However, due to privacy the resolution of the situation may be undisclosed to the reporter.

v.O2 (12/2022)



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C4SO WHISTLEBLOWER REPORTING FORM

The first step in the reporting process is to call the Diocesan Ombudsman, Kimberly Pfeiler (469-766-1272) within 24 hours of becoming aware of the incident. If you are unable to make contact with the Ombudsman in 24 hours, call (615-968-5348) and email (admin@c4so.org) the diocesan office for assistance in connecting with her. Follow the guidance given by the Ombudsman, which may include mandatory state reporting and notifying the Rector, who will then notify relevant local persons.

After conversing with the Ombudsman, you will complete a Whistleblower Reporting Form available at c4so.org/safe-church-training.

Personal History Statement for Employees/Volunteers

Congregation Name: _____

Congregation Coordinator Name & Preferred Contact Method: _____

The subject of abuse and neglect can trigger powerful feelings and sensitivities. The statistics indicate that our parish includes people who have been abused, and some who have abused others. Like you, we are saddened by its prevalence and long-term impact, often felt well into adulthood. As His children, we are called to “bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2).

We are respectfully requesting information to discern whether you may need special care and/or considerations as a result of your personal history. Our purpose in asking is to initiate the conversation, make informed decisions and care for you as your church family.

Have you ever:

- Been arrested for, or convicted of, any crime involving child abuse and/or neglect, or had any such conviction expunged? Yes ____ No ____
- Been charged with child sexual abuse in a civil proceeding? Yes ____ No ____
- Been charged with child neglect in a civil proceeding? Yes ____ No ____
- Committed an act of child sexual abuse? Yes ____ No ____
- Committed an act of child neglect or physical abuse? Yes ____ No ____
- Been diagnosed with any paraphilic psychological condition, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, including, but not limited to, pedophilia, voyeurism, or exhibitionism (except where such inquiry is prohibited or limited by applicable laws or regulations)?
Yes ____ No ____
- Are you aware of:
Having any traits or tendencies that could pose any threat to children, youth or others?
Yes ____ No ____
Any reason why you should not work with children, youth or others? Yes ____ No ____
If yes, further questions may be asked in the interview process.

Printed Name

Date

Signature



Sample On-Site Supervisory Plan²

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. This plan is offered for information only. It is a sample of what a supervisory plan may look like. Each congregation will need to personalize such a plan to its own specific policies and procedures.

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, _____ will check to ensure that the nurseries are fully staffed at each of the service/Sunday School times. _____ 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. _____ 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.

² This sample form is provided as one possible resource. The church should consult with its legal counsel before implementing or modifying this specific form and regarding its use and maintenance in specific circumstances.



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Injury/Incident Reporting: Staff or volunteers will fill out an incident report and advise _____ 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 _____,

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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Parental Consent Form for Use of Videos and Photos of Minors

_____ [Church name] recognizes the need to ensure the welfare and safety of all young people taking part in any activity associated with our organization. In accordance with our child and youth protection policy we will not permit photographs, video or other images of children or youth to be taken without the consent of a parent. As your child will be taking part in _____ [Insert name of specific event, or reference continuing child and youth classes or programs], we would like to ask for your consent to take photographs/videos of the event or activity that may contain images of your child. It is likely that these images may be used as:

- a record of the activity or the event which may be presented on the church website or social media
- in a written evaluation report of the activity or event that will be viewed by the church
- publicity material for further activities or events on leaflets/websites/brochures
- illustrations of the activities or events in published articles

The church will take all steps to ensure these images are used solely for the purposes they are intended. If you become aware that these images are being used inappropriately you should inform the rector or congregation coordinator immediately.

We would be grateful if you would return this form to the congregation coordinator by

_____ [Date].

I _____ [Parent] consent to/ do not consent to _____
_____ [Church] photographing or videoing _____ [name of minor].

Date:



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