

ECMN Safe Church Policy for the Protection of Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults

This model policy includes the following segments:

**Note: When accessing this document in Microsoft Word format on a computer, hold CTRL (or ⌘ command for Apple Computers) and click on the titles for direct links to the corresponding section.*

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I. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

This document is a statement for the Episcopal Church in Minnesota (ECMN), setting forth expectations for its leaders and staff and those of ECMN's affiliated congregations, institutions, and organizations across the diocese, in their relationships with children, youth, and vulnerable adults, recognizing that not all leaders and staff may have these relationships. The purpose of this policy is to establish standards of behavior across ECMN with the goal of preventing instances of abuse and appropriately responding when abuse is suspected or reported. The document includes:

- **Screening and Training Protocols** ([Appendix A](#)), which explains the level of screening and training required before engaging with children, youth, and vulnerable adults;
- A description of requisite training that is specialized and tailored to role and function ([Appendix C](#));
- Behavioral standards designed to ensure that children, youth, and vulnerable adults, and all who engage in ministry with them, are treated with dignity and respect in all settings.

II. DEFINITIONS

NOTE: These definitions reflect current understanding of terms describing gender identity and sexuality, which are continuing to evolve.

Abuse: Egregious harm, physical abuse, sexual abuse, substantial child endangerment, or threatened injury as these terms are defined under [Minnesota] 260E.03

Adult: Anyone who is 18 years or older and not in high school (See footnote on page x).

Adult Protective Services: A social services program provided by state and local governments serving vulnerable adults and their families who are in need of assistance. Adult Protective Services receive and investigate reports of suspected abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

Bullying: Behavior that intimidates, humiliates, offends, degrades, or harms another person, whether verbal, psychological, social, physical, or otherwise.

Child: Anyone under the age of 12 years. (see footnote on page X).

Child Protective Services: A social services program provided by state and local governments serving children and their families who are in need of assistance. Child Protective Services receive and investigate reports of suspected abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

Cisgender: An adjective describing a person whose sense of personal identity and gender corresponds with their gender or sex assigned at birth. This is an evolving term, as our understanding and language around gender identity and sexuality expands and matures.

Community Covenant: a voluntary, solemn agreement binding participants together in a relationship with God and one another, rooted in the Baptismal Covenant. Emphasizes mutual support, accountability, shared worship, and a commitment to love, service, and justice, reflecting Christ's love.

Gender Non-Binary: An umbrella term for people who identify their gender as neither male nor female. These people might identify as both ("bigender"), neither ("agender"), a mix between the two ("genderfluid"), or they can be unsure of their gender ("genderqueer"). This is an evolving term, as our understanding and language around gender identity and sexuality expands and matures.

Intake Officer: The person(s) designated by the Bishop to receive information regarding an offense for which a member of the clergy may be held accountable under *Title IV of the Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church*, which sets out the disciplinary process for clergy. Anyone may contact an Intake Officer to report concerns about a member of the clergy.

Leader: A person, adult or youth, who, for the benefit of another, engages in ministry without responsibility for oversight of others engaged in that same ministry. Examples include Sunday school teachers, camp counselors, and program team.

LGBTQ+: An acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, and others. It refers to people whose gender identities vary from their gender or sex assigned at birth, and those whose sexual orientations differ from the heterosexual majority. The "+" is an effort to include additional gender identities. This is an evolving term, as our understanding and language around gender identity and sexuality expands and matures.

Mandated Reporter: A person who is required by state law to report reasonable suspicions of abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation of vulnerable populations to the appropriate state agency.

Off-Site: Any location other than the ECMN offices, facilities, or locations owned or operated by either ECMN or the Trustees of ECMN, or any location other than those owned or operated by faith communities, institutions, and organizations of the diocese. This includes facilities that are being rented for the purpose of programs.

On-sight: Any location that constitutes a facility owned, rented and/or operated by ECMN, the Trustees of ECMN, or any ECMN faith community, institution, or organization.

Overnight: Any event that starts on one calendar day and ends on a different calendar day.

Pastoral Relationship: Any relationship (1) between a Member of the Clergy and any person to whom the Member of the Clergy provides or has provided counseling, pastoral

care, spiritual direction or spiritual guidance, or from whom such Member of the Clergy has received information within the Rite of Reconciliation of a Penitent, or (2) between a lay minister and any person to whom the lay minister is offering prayer, ministry, and/or any person from whom the lay minister has received sensitive, personal, or confidential information in the course of offering ministry.

Programs: Official activities and programs sponsored by ECMN and its faith communities, organizations, and institutions that ECMN may participate in (examples include: Teens Encounter Christ, retreats, conventions, convocations, pilgrimages, mission experiences, New Beginnings, camp programs, Acolyte Festival, etc.).

Public Records Check: A search of documents and data available to the public including criminal and civil court records, credit reports, and driving records from the department of motor vehicles. Typically, such searches are conducted by a third party with expertise in this area.

Residential Facility: Any institutional or group home setting where a vulnerable adult resides on a permanent or temporary basis such as a nursing home, rehabilitation center, assisted living facility, treatment center, or memory care facility.

Responsible Person: The person designated as being accountable for compliance with this policy for each event or program.

Sacramental Use: Consecrated or unconsecrated wine used in the setting of Eucharist

Sexual misconduct: A broad term encompassing any behavior of a sexual nature that is committed without consent or capacity for consent or by force, intimidation, coercion, or manipulation. Sexual misconduct can be committed by a person of any gender, and it can occur between people of the same or different gender.

Supervisor: A person who has oversight responsibilities for a ministry program and/or Leaders in a ministry program.

Title IV: A section of the *Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church* pertaining to clergy professional standards, accountability and ecclesiastical discipline.

Transgender: An adjective describing a person whose sense of personal identity and gender does not correspond with the gender or sex assigned to them at birth. This is an evolving term, as our understanding and language around gender identity and sexuality expands and matures.

Training: Organized activity designed to provide information and/or instructions to strengthen and enhance the recipient's understanding, capacity, and exercise of ministry.

- **General Training:** A standard of training that will foster a culture of safety and inclusion for all people that includes a broad overview of issues of vulnerability, power, and healthy boundaries.

- **Specialized Training:** A standard of additional training that equips people who participate in or have oversight responsibility for ministries. In addition to General Training, a person will have access to required training that is specialized and tailored to their role and ministry function.
- Courses or modules required for training to be completed will meet or exceed the standards set forth by The Episcopal Church and General Convention. (from the *Model Policies for Protection of Children & Youth, Vulnerable Adults*)
- As of 2026, the courses are divided between different groups with specific access to children, youth, vulnerable adults, and church properties.
- To see the current list of required courses, see **Appendix C**.

Vulnerable Adult:

- Any adult at or older than the age designated as an elder;
- Any adult who is infirm or diminished in capacity due to age, illness, or disability;
- Any adult who is ministered to in their home (by Eucharistic Visitors, Pastoral Care Visitors, Stephen Ministers, or others);
- Any adult who is wholly or partially dependent upon one or more other persons for emotional, psychological, or physical care or support, such dependency may be temporary as in the case of an accident, illness, or birth of a child; and
- Any adult who by virtue of a crisis, experiences vulnerability leading to dependency on another or lacks agency in a pastoral relationship as in the wake of death of a family member or job loss.

Youth: Anyone who is at least 12 years old, but not yet 18 years old. A youth may also be an individual who is 18 years old or older, and still in high school.

III. INCLUSIVENESS

It is the policy of The Episcopal Church and ECMN that no one shall be denied rights, status or access to an equal place in the life, worship, and governance of any program or activity because of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, differing abilities, or socio-economic class.

The Episcopal Church in Minnesota seeks to support all persons by providing reasonable alternative arrangements even if not required by federal or state law to address the accessibility, safety and comfort of all participants in sponsored programs, activities, and events.

See other sections of this policy for specific requirements and applications of this principle.

IV. APPLICATION AND SCREENING

Background Checks Required for:

- All ECMN staff members before being hired
- All consultants and volunteers who will be working on programs or other ECMN events involving children, youth, and vulnerable adults within any of ECMN's affiliated organizations, institutions, and congregations

Scope of Background Checks may Include

- Criminal background check
- Multi-state sex offender check
- Reference checks
- Civil records check
- Social Security and identity check

V. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

General Training Required for

- All persons who work with Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults
 - Clergy, staff, volunteers, consultants

Specialized Training Required for

- Supervisors and those with oversight responsibilities (i.e. Diocesan Council, Vestries, Bishop's Committees, etc.) for ministry programs
- Adults in ministry with Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults
- Depending on the role and responsibilities, Specialized Training shall include: Prevention, identification, and response to all forms of abuse and neglect, including financial exploitation. For a list of additional training modules, please see **Appendix C**, or www.praesidiumacademy.com.

Use of Authorized Training Materials

- General and Specialized Training shall be provided either through ECMN's online portal to Praesidium Academy, or by a Safe Church Trainer approved by the ECMN Safe Church Manager
- Additional training with regard to local state statutes, responses to allegations and incidents, and documentation may be required by the Bishop and ECMN staff.

Re-Certification of Training

- Required to be done every three years in accordance with The Episcopal Church's Model Policies for the Protection of Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults (website link)

Record Keeping of Training

- Records sufficient to evidence compliance with these policies shall be maintained by the faith community or diocesan organization subject to these policies

VI. MONITORING AND SUPERVISION OF PROGRAMS

Supervision of ECMN activities and programs or where ECMN Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adult participants are present shall include/consist of:

- A Designated Responsible person (typically clergy, staff, vestry members, or trained adult leader) must be appointed by event leader/organizer, and made known to the participants
- The Designated Responsible person shall monitor and supervise the behavior of adults, children, and youth to ensure behavior is appropriate and healthy boundaries are maintained and these policies are followed
- A Designated Responsible person, usually the Priest or Deacon of the faith community in which the Lay Minister serves, shall provide ongoing supervision to Lay Ministers who have pastoral relationships with others regarding the scope, accountability, and responsibility of the ministry

Record of persons working with Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults

- ECMN and local faith communities, institutions, and organizations must maintain a current list of persons approved to minister to children, youth, and vulnerable adults with their contact information

VII. Behavioral Standards

Guidance for those who minister to Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults

DOs

- Have ongoing spiritual practices, which might include daily prayer, regular participation in corporate worship, and Bible study;
- Spend time with and listen to children, youth, and vulnerable adults, and advocate for their ministry within the Body of Christ;
- Offer appropriate physical expressions of care, which may include:
 - With children and youth
 - High fives and fist bumps
 - Hand-holding while walking with small children or in prayer
 - Brief touching of shoulders, hands, or arms
 - With vulnerable adults
 - Brief hugs, side hugs
 - Pats on the should or back
 - Handshakes
 - Holding hands during prayer
- Maintain healthy boundaries when sharing personal information.

Standards When Working with Children, Youth

Adults who work with children and youth are expected to model the patterns of healthy relationships that children and youth deserve in all settings. Interactions should meet all requirements outlined in this policy.

Below, find behaviors that are prohibited:

Adults are strictly forbidden from initiating a private relationship with any unrelated child or youth from the church not directly related to sanctioned church programs, activities and events.

- **Two unrelated adults.** At least two unrelated adults (not related by birth or marriage, and at least two years older than the eldest participant) shall be present at programs, activities, and events for children and youth
 - If unanticipated circumstances result in an adult being alone with children or youth, that adult shall report those circumstances to the Responsible Person as soon as possible

- **Alcoholic beverages**

- No person working with children or youth shall be under the influence of alcohol
- No person working with children or youth shall consume non-sacramental alcohol at any program, activity, or event where children or youth are present
- Alcohol (sacramental or otherwise) shall not be stored in publicly accessible areas where any program, activity, and events for children or youth occur
- No person working with children or youth shall discuss their own use, or abuse of alcohol with children or youth
- No person working with children or youth may provide them with non-sacramental alcohol

- **Illegal Drugs**

- No person working with children or youth shall be under the influence of illegal drugs at any program, activity, or event where children or youth are present
- No person working with children or youth shall use any illegal drugs at any program, activity, or event where children or youth are present
- No person working with children or youth shall discuss their own use, or abuse drugs with children or youth
- No person working with children or youth shall provide them with illegal drugs at any program, activity, or event where children or youth are present

- **Prescription and Other Legal Drugs**

- No person working with children or youth shall be under the influence of misused legal drugs at any program, activity, or event where children or youth are present
- No person working with children or youth shall use prescription drugs other than as prescribed for them at any program, activity, or event where children or youth are present
- No person working with children or youth may provide them with prescription drugs other than those specifically provided by their parent/guardian and administered in accordance with the parent/guardian's instructions

- **Tobacco**

- No person working with children or youth shall use cigarettes, tobacco products, e-cigarettes, or vapes where children or youth are present at programs, activities, or events for children or youth

- No person working with children or youth shall provide any child or youth with cigarettes, tobacco products, e-cigarettes, or vapes

- **Pornography**
 - No person working with children or youth may have any pornography, legal or illegal, in their possession at any program, activity, or event where children or youth are present. This includes on an electronic device in their possession or control
 - No person working with children or youth shall provide, show, or otherwise make any pornography, legal or illegal, to any child or youth
 - No person working with children or youth shall discuss their own use, or abuse of pornography with children or youth

- **Sexual Content and Behavior**
 - No person working with children or youth shall show or discuss sexually explicit movies, videos, music, books, or pornography to any child or youth
 - No person working with children or youth shall discuss their own sexual activities, fantasies, or their own use, or abuse of drugs or alcohol with children or youth
 - No person working with children or youth shall engage in any romantic or sexual behavior, in any form, including but not limited to written, verbal or physical, with any child or youth in a program, activity, or event whether or not the sexual behavior occurs at a program, activity, or event for children or youth

- **Illegal Behavior**
 - No person working with children or youth shall engage in illegal behavior at any program, activity, or event at which children or youth are present
 - No person working with children or youth shall permit other adults to engage in illegal behavior at any program, activity, or event at which children or youth are present
 - No person working with children or youth shall permit children or youth to engage in illegal behavior at any program, activity, or event at which children or youth are present
 - No person working with children or youth shall discuss their own illegal behavior with children or youth

- **Computers and electronic devices.** Children and youth shall have adequate supervision when using electronic devices during the course of programs, activities and events
 - The Responsible Persons should be informed of any mis-use of devices to bully or demean participants and/or the distribution of pornographic materials. See *Recommended Practices and Guidelines for Social Media and Electronic Communications* (Appendix B).

- **Bullying**
 - Intimidating, threatening, abusive, or harming conduct that is objectively offensive, involves an actual or perceived power imbalance, and is repeated or forms a pattern.
 - Can substantially interfere with a student's formation, or cause reasonable fear of harm or emotional distress
 - Responsible person(s) shall make determinations on what is and is not bullying based upon relationships with participants.

- **One-to-One Conversations with Children or Youth.**
 - When one-to-one conversations occurs between an adult and a child or youth, another unrelated adult is either to be present or capable of visually monitoring the conversation. Examples include:
 - Planned or unplanned on-site conversations can take place in a public location, away from where others can hear but in view of other adults
 - Planned off-site conversations/meetings can take place in a public place (such as a coffee shop or restaurant) in view of other adults
 - A Responsible Person shall be informed about the appointment or plans in advance.
 - Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed if a child or youth discloses a situation pertaining to abuse, neglect, self-harm, or exploitation due to mandatory reporting laws and obligations to parents and guardians
 - Any person receiving such information should contact their local clergy, or a member of the Bishop's staff regarding to what steps to take.

- **Violence and Weapons**
 - No one is to strike, hit, or otherwise physically threaten or harm anyone at any time
 - No adult, child, or youth shall have weapons of any kind at any program,

activity or event for children or youth.

- Exceptions to this restriction may be made for camp programs or other specific programs with prior approval.
- Suspected violations must be reported immediately to the Responsible Person, program director or your supervisor

Standards When Working with Vulnerable Adults

All who work with vulnerable adults are expected to model the patterns of healthy relationships.

Persons working with vulnerable adults **shall NOT**

- Unduly influence a person to whom they minister
- Accept gifts, other than token gifts, from those to whom they minister
 - Ministers given gifts shall report those gifts in writing to their Supervisor, clergy, senior warden, or Responsible Person
- Give gifts, other than token gifts, to vulnerable adults to whom they minister
- Accept loans of any kind from those to whom they minister
- Allow themselves to be named as a beneficiary or to act as an administrator, personal representative, trustee, or executor of a will or trust of any vulnerable person to whom they minister

Persons working with vulnerable adults must immediately inform their supervisor, clergy, senior warden, or Responsible Person of anything that causes concern for the safety or wellbeing of those to whom they minister.

VIII. SAFE SPACE AND BUILDING SAFETY

Persons with keys or access to buildings or locked spaces

- Anyone with keys or electronic access to buildings where programs, activities, and events for Children and Youth occur shall:
 - Have a background check
 - Complete required training

Unused or Unoccupied Spaces

Spaces not being used as part of the program, activity, or event should not be accessible to Children and Youth. Given the vast differences in facilities, this will vary by program, activity, or event

Bathrooms and Changing Facilities

- Safe bathroom/shower facilities must be provided by gender and age (or specific times must be assigned to the use of a single facility)
- Adults should either have separate shower facilities or shower at other times than the children and youth
- Separate dressing facilities should be provided for children or youth and adults
- Transgender, genderqueer, or gender non-binary children, youth, or adults who express the need or desire for increased privacy should be provided with reasonable alternative arrangements
 - Reasonable alternative arrangements may include the use of a private area, or a separate changing schedule, or use of a single stall restroom
 - Any alternative arrangement should be provided in a way that protects the person's ability to keep their transgender status confidential
 - No one should not be required to use a locker room or restroom that conflicts with their gender identity

IX. Special Considerations for Off-Site Programming

See Appendix E

X. RESPONDING TO CONCERNS

Suspected Abuse, Neglect, or Exploitation of Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults

Any person who has reason to suspect that abuse, neglect, or exploitation of children, youth, or a vulnerable adult has taken place within the last three years, must comply with

Minnesota law. The Minnesota statute on reporting maltreatment, Minnesota 260E.06, requires that mandated reporters report suspected maltreatment of children or youth to local county child protection agency, police department, sheriff or must contact Minnesota's Child Protective Services.

Suspected maltreatment of a vulnerable adult should be reported to the Minnesota Adult Abuse Reporting Center, 1-844-880-1574.

In addition, anyone who has reason to suspect that abuse, neglect, or exploitation of children, youth, or a vulnerable adult has taken place within a facility or program being run by ECMN or on of our faith communities, institutions, or organizations, should immediately inform one of more or the following:

- The Bishop
- The director, head, or other governing officer in the case of suspected maltreatment that may have occurred at a place or facility owned or controlled by another organization or institution

Suspected Violations of this Policy

Anyone who suspects a violation of these policies shall immediately report the violation to the Responsible Person for the event or ministry. This could include, but is not limited to: Clergy, supervisor, elected leadership.

Local Resources for Response

Each faith community or organization shall provide a list of local resources that can give information and assistance to anyone concerned about circumstances that may violate this policy. Such resources shall include:

- Responsible Person(s) for programs and ministries with children and youth;
- Clergy in charge of a congregation;
- Wardens;
- Bishop;
- Intake Officer(s); and
- Child Protective Services.

XI. POLICY ADOPTION, AND IMPLEMENTATION

The Episcopal Church in Minnesota Adoption and Implementation

This Policy becomes effective for ECMN itself, and all its faith communities upon adoption by Diocesan Council.

The Episcopal Church in Minnesota shall ensure that all programs and events of the diocese involving children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults comply with the standards set out in this policy.

Information on how to obtain a copy of this policy shall be posted prominently where it is available to the faith community. See **Appendix D**.

Appendix A: Screening and Training Protocols

Screening and Training Chart	Ministry Function	Public Records	App/Int/Ref
Staff & Contracted Ministers (not covered below)	Church Employees	x	x
	Diocesan contractors (1099)	Depends	x
	Clergy	x	x
	Church Contractors (1099)	Depends	x
	Diocesan Employees	x	x
	Diocesan Staff - unpaid	x	x
Program Supervisors			
	Child/Youth Choir Director	x	x
	Choir Director	x	x
	Commissioned Ministry Teams	x	x
	Director of Religious Education	x	x
	Camp Director	x	x
	Youth Minister	x	x
Program Participants (non-supervisory)			
	Acolyte Mentor	x	
	Choir parents		
	Church School Teacher	x	
	Counselor in Training		x
	Nursery Worker - unpaid	x	
	Parish Nurse	x	x
	Teenage assistants		
	Musicians who work with youth	x	x
*Off-site	Camp Counselor	x	x
	Lay Chaplains	x	x
	Pastoral Care Teams	x	x
*Overnight	Youth Group Leaders	x	x
Drivers	Drivers	DMV	
Governance	Church Elected		
	Treasurer	Criminal & Credit	
	Vestry		
	Wardens	Criminal & Credit	
Key Access	Altar Guild	Recommended	
	Building Hosts	Recommended	
Home Visitors	Eucharistic Visitors	x	x
	Home Visitors	x	x
	Stephen Ministers	x	x
	Church Staff - unpaid	x	x
*Offsite: any location other than the sponsoring Episcopal Church, institution, facility, or campus			
*Overnight: Any event that starts on one calendar day and ends on a different calendar day.			

Appendix B: Recommended Practices and Guidelines for Social Media and Electronic Communications for Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults

Social media shapes the lives of young people and has the potential to empower ministry. Behavior in the digital sphere is never private. Posted content may be used out of context and out of the control of the originating individuals and organizations, putting them at risk. In addition, these powerfully connective tools are subject to the same dynamic of unequal power and potential for abuse that present a risk in all ministry relationships. Faith Communities face the challenge of identifying and proactively addressing areas of potential risk in social media use in the midst of rapidly evolving technology. The following recommended practices and guidelines are designed to be a flexible template for developing policies and covenants governing the safe use of social media and digital communication in ministry settings.

General Information about Digital Communications

- All communications sent digitally (email, social networking sites or platforms, notes, texts, or posts, etc.) are NOT CONFIDENTIAL and can be shared or reposted to others.
- Interactions in the virtual world need to be transparent; that is, occurring in such a way that it is easy for others to see what actions are performed.
- In the virtual world, healthy boundaries and safe church practices must be adhered to as they are in the physical world. In the virtual world, “friend” can mean anyone with whom you are willing to communicate through that medium.
- In the physical world, “friend” can mean much more in terms of intimacy, self-disclosure, mutuality, and expectations for relationships.
- Laws regarding mandated reporting of suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation of children or youth apply in the virtual world as they do in the physical world. Check your local applicable laws.

Recommended Practices and Guidelines for Churches and Organizations:

- Establish a policy that outlines professional and institutional standards for profiles and interactions on social networking sites and platforms.
- Establish a policy of transparency regarding social media accounts. The best practice is to have the diocese, congregation, or organization create and “own” the social media accounts representing the diocese, congregation, or organization respectively

and have multiple administrators and/or supervisors with access. If personal accounts are used, a system of monitoring should be established.

- Establish a policy regarding the identification or “tagging” of individuals in online photos or videos. For example, on Facebook, “tagging” someone in a photo or video creates a hyperlink to that person’s profile page that can be clicked by anyone. The best practice is for the diocese, congregation, or organization not to identify or “tag” individuals. The “tagging” of children and youth should be prohibited. When written permission is provided by a parent/guardian, the captioning of photos or videos of minors may be permitted. The caption should not include the minor’s full name, nor should it create a clickable link to someone’s personal profile. A policy of whether or not an individual can “self-tag” in a diocese, congregation, or organization’s online photo or video should also be established.
- A diocese, congregation, or organization does not have a responsibility to review or monitor the personal pages or groups that are not sponsored by that diocese, congregation, or organization, except as described in #2 above. The preceding statement should be included in the diocese, congregation, or organization’s Social Media Policy.
- Email can be a good method of communication, and it also has the opportunity to be misunderstood. Having a clear understanding and procedure for responding to digital communication that raises concern is prudent for all. Best practices can include not responding immediately and sharing the communication with a supervisor before responding. Phone and face-to-face meetings are preferred when responding to emotionally driven communications or pastoral emergencies.
- When using photos and videos for ministry purposes, obtain a media release for each person and only post images that respect the dignity of every person depicted.
- Dioceses, congregations, or organizations must inform participants when they are being videoed because church buildings are not considered public space. Signs should be posted that indicate a service or activity will be broadcast when worship services or activities are streamed or distributed on the web or via other broadcast media.

Recommended Practices and Guidelines for Interactions with Children and Youth:

- Prudent judgement should be used in the time of day a child or youth is contacted through social media. Under normal circumstances, refrain from contact or exchanging texts, chats, or emails before 8:00 am or after 10:00 pm, unless it’s an emergency.
- Privacy settings and personal boundaries should be implemented.

- Create and use profiles on social networking sites that meet professional and institutional standards.
- Do not submit connection requests (such as friend requests on Facebook or “Add Me” on Snapchat) to children or youth for personal interactions. Youth may not be able to decline such requests due to the disparity of power between youth and adults. Youth may ask to be “friends,” and adults should discern the nature of contact appropriate for healthy ministry.
- Apply privacy settings that are consistent with all children and youth, across all social networking sites and platforms. Avoid playing favorites or the appearance of playing favorites.
- Establish a regular ongoing and consistent system of review that focuses on settings, accessible content, photos, and videos to ensure compliance with professional and institutional standards.
- Inform parents of children and youth of social networking sites and platforms used within the ministry.
- When possible, send communication (1) to entire groups, (2) on an individual’s “wall,” or (3) in public areas, rather than in private messages. This includes photos, images and videos.
- When sending emails to a child or youth that contain personal or private information regarding that child or youth, a copy should be sent to the parents or guardians as well. Examples of these types of emails include: payment due information, specific medical requests or questions, etc. Mass emails sent to an entire group are not required to be copied to parents or guardians.
- Disclose **ongoing** digital pastoral communications (ie: e-mails, Facebook messages, texting, etc) with children and youth to a parent and/or a supervisor to determine when a referral to a professional provider or resource is needed.

Create covenants to govern digital groups, which include:

- Appropriate and inappropriate behavior of members (bullying, pictures that depict abuse, violence, illegal activities, sexual acts, etc.) and the consequence for inappropriate behavior;
- Who may join and/or view group activity, when participants should leave the group and when/if the group will be disbanded;
- Description of content that can be posted or published on the site or page;

- A prohibition of “tagging” photos and videos of children and youth. However, the captioning of photos and videos is permissible with written permission from a parent or guardian;
 - Notification that mandatory reporting laws will be followed; and
 - Consequences for breaking the covenant.
- In video calls, follow the same criteria used in telephone calls. In addition, prudent judgement regarding attire and surroundings should be observed. Comply with the following best practices regarding “groups” on social networking sites:
 - Have at least two unrelated adult administrators as well as at least two youth administrators for groups that are designed for youth;
 - Use closed groups, but not “hidden” or “secret” groups, for youth;
 - Have only youth administrators invite other youth to join the online group, unless a youth previously asked an adult administrator to invite them to join;
 - Remove any content that shows or describes inappropriate behavior outside the bounds of the established behavioral covenant;
 - Open social networking groups for youth to parents of current members; Remove adult leaders of youth groups and youth who are no longer members, due to departure, removal from position, or are ineligible because they “aged-out” of a program from social networking sites, list serves, etc;
 - Observe mandated reporting laws regarding suspected abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
 - Adult Administrators shall delete inappropriate material posted in digital groups, address the behavior and report it, if necessary, in accordance with legal and institutional requirements.

Appendix C - Course list for General & Specialized Training Modules

Safe Church Courses Recommended to Faith Communities and Ministries by the Episcopal Church in Minnesota

Clergy and All Paid Church Staff (General & Specialized)

- Safe Church, Safe Communities: Introduction & Theological Background
- Safe Church, Safe Communities: Organizational Rules and Policies
- Safe Church, Safe Communities: Healthy Boundaries
- Safe Church, Safe Communities: Power and Relationships
- Safe Church, Safe Communities: Abuse & Neglect
- Safe Church, Safe Communities: Inclusion
- Safe Church, Safe Communities: Pastoral Relationships
- Safe Church, Safe Communities: Bullying
- Duty to Report: Mandated Reporter

Volunteer (adult or minor) working with minors (under 18) or vulnerable populations (General & Specialized)

- Safe Church, Safe Communities: Introduction & Theological Background
- Safe Church, Safe Communities: Organizational Rules and Policies
- Safe Church, Safe Communities: Healthy Boundaries
- Safe Church, Safe Communities: Abuse & Neglect
- Safe Church, Safe Communities: Inclusion
- Safe Church, Safe Communities: Bullying
- Duty to Report: Mandated Reporter

Vestry, Wardens, and elected positions not working directly with children or vulnerable populations (General & Specialized)

- Safe Church, Safe Communities: Introduction & Theological Background
- Safe Church, Safe Communities: Organizational Rules and Policies
- Safe Church, Safe Communities: Healthy Boundaries
- Safe Church, Safe Communities: Power and Relationships
- Safe Church, Safe Communities: Inclusion
- Safe Church, Safe Communities: Bullying
- Duty to Report: Mandated Reporter

Key Holders, Lay Leaders, Adult ministries, and users not working with or making decisions about ministries with minors (General Training)

- Safe Church, Safe Communities: Introduction & Theological Background
- Safe Church, Safe Communities: Organizational Rules and Policies
- Safe Church, Safe Communities: Healthy Boundaries
- Duty to Report: Mandated Reporter

Appendix D - Sample Resource for Contact Information for Resources to Respond to Concerns

The Episcopal Church in Minnesota
1101 W. Broadway
Minneapolis, MN 55411
(612) 871-5311

safechurch@episcopalmn.org

www.episcopalmn.org/safe-church

For your local Faith Community or Ministry

Rector, Priest-In-Charge, Director:

Senior Warden:

Junior Warden:

Safe Church Manager (if not listed yet)

Other Community Resources:

Emergency Line: 911 (or local number)

City Non-Emergency Line: *use local number*

National Suicide Hotline: 988

County Mandated Reporter Line:

Other resources here:

APPENDIX E - Special Considerations for Off-site Programing

Special Considerations for Off-Site Programming

Off-site programs, trips, and events are a welcome and often necessary means for spiritual, social, and emotional development and well being of children, youth, and vulnerable adults. They also present additional challenges for maintaining best practices. The expectations for safe space, as described above, should be observed off-site.

1. Prior Approvals

- Prior written, documented approval by your supervisor, the Rector or Priest-in-Charge, Wardens, and Vestry or Bishop's Committee. Authorization is required for all off-site child, youth, or vulnerable adult programs, and that written approval shall be documented. (From Safe Church Policy - God's Children, TEC)

2. Registration, Waiver, and Release Forms

- All participants must complete and sign a registration form and a waiver and release form before participating in any ECMN and faith community-sponsored programs. Confidentiality must be preserved with respect to medical and other sensitive information in the forms: records must be kept secure under lock-and-key, or using secure, digital passwords. Such forms must be renewed annually, or as each program dictates.
 - There must be a parent/guardian's signature on all release and waiver forms for minors. If a person is unable to consent due to impairment or lack of agency, then the signature of that person's guardian, spouse, or legally designated representative is required. Digital signatures are considered valid signatures.
 - Completed release and waiver forms shall be maintained in a secure location on-site or online.
- Permission slips for minor-participant-child(ren) shall be provided for each off-site event and shall be signed by the parent/guardian for the children and youth. For vulnerable adults, documentation is limited to standard liability, waivers, and release forms. .
- Prior permission for a minor and/or any individual to be photographed or recorded on film, videotape, audiotape, or other electronic media is required from a parent/guardian. Consideration around live-stream, broadcasting, or recording is to be reasonable, and publication of minor-participant names is up to the discretion of each faith community to design a policy that meets their faith community's or ministries' needs.

- Dioceses, congregations, or organizations must inform participants when they are being videoed because church buildings are not considered public space. Signs should be posted that indicate a service or activity will be broadcast when worship services or activities are streamed or distributed on the web or via other broadcast media.

3. First Aid and Medications

- Current certification in First Aid, CPR, and Automated External Defibrillator (AED) is strongly encouraged for those who work with children, youth, and vulnerable adults. Each ECMN-sponsored program shall have an adult with the proper certifications.
- A first aid kit, appropriately stocked for the event and participants, shall be available in an easily accessible location.
- A record must be kept of all medication or first aid given to a participant, with permission. This record shall include the participant's name, the date and time of service, the name of the person administering medication or treatment, and a description of the medication, dosage, and/or treatment given.
- All medications (prescription and over the counter) belonging to minors or vulnerable adults requiring assistance with medications shall be given to the Responsible Person or event leader, unless otherwise agreed upon.
- Only the Responsible Person, or their adult designee, shall administer medications unless a parent or guardian has provided written permission for a youth to self-administer medication, including, for example: inhalers, epi-pens, and birth-control pills.

4. Supervision

- At any gathering of children or youth, there *shall be at least two unrelated adults* with one being age 25 or older, preferably reflecting the sex and gender identity of the participants.
- Minimum ratios of adult to child/youth (from American Camp Association) shall be as follows:
 - 5 years & younger — 1 adult for each 5 overnight-participants and 1 adult for each 6 day-participants
 - 6–8 years — 1:6 for overnight, and 1:8 for day
 - 9–14 years — 1:8 for overnight and 1:10 for day
 - 15–18 years — 1:10 for overnight and 1:12 for day
- When you have new leaders-in-training, the leadership teams should also have a reasonable number of experienced adult leaders to provide support.

5. Insurance

All trips to off-site destinations must have adequate insurance in case of emergency. For more information, contact the Missioner for Finance for ECMN, or your representative from your insurance carrier/provider.

A. Overnight Programs

In overnight programming, particular attention will be given to historically excluded or unrecognized people, such as LGBTQ+ and differently-abled individuals. In a situation of unequal power and safety, preferences of these individuals merit additional consideration, accommodation, and action to ensure:

- Participant privacy;
- Maximization of social integration of all participants;
- Minimization of stigmatization of any participants;
- Equal opportunity to participate;
- Safety of all participants.

Other rules for overnight programs:

- The safe use of restrooms and showers by all participants requires event leaders to consider numerous factors, including, but not limited to: age, sex, gender identity and expression, and privacy. Adults should have separate showers and/or separate times for showers.
- Overnight programs shall provide safe, supervised sleeping arrangements.
 - No bed, cot, or sleeping bag shall have more than one person in it.
 - Supervision by at least two unrelated adults is required in any space where one or more children or youth are sleeping, including large, “gym” spaces, and hotel rooms or cabins.
 - It is acceptable for all participants to sleep in the same open area when dressing rooms and bathrooms provide appropriate privacy.
- Participants shall have access to three substantial meals each full day and access to sufficient water.
- Participants shall be given the opportunity for at least seven hours of sleep each 24-hour period, except for programs where parental/guardian permission is given to miss sleep. In these cases, children and youth must agree to participate in writing, and parents or guardians must give written permission that includes certification that the youth or child does not have a medical condition that would put the participant at risk by missing sleep.
- Participants shall have some time set aside each day for rest or free time.

Best practice guidelines for hotel stays with children and youth:

- One child or youth per bed, including cots, pullouts or hide-a-beds, and rollaway beds;
- At least 2 children or 2 youth in each room;
- Adult supervisors or chaperones have rooms on the same floor, scattered among the rooms with children or youth, and at least one adult room is by the stairs or elevators;
- Adult leader assigns rooms and room occupants

B. Restrooms, Showering, and Changing Facilities

The appropriate use of restrooms, showers and changing facilities by participants and adults requires leaders to consider numerous factors, including, but not limited to age, sex, gender identity and expression, and privacy.

- Safe bathroom/shower facilities must be provided by gender and age (or specific times must be assigned to the use of a single facility)
- Adults should either have separate shower facilities or shower at other times than the children and youth
- Separate dressing facilities should be provided for children or youth and adults
- Transgender, genderqueer, or gender non-binary children, youth, or adults who express the need or desire for increased privacy should be provided with reasonable alternative arrangements

Reasonable alternative arrangements may include the use of a private area, or a separate changing schedule, or use of a single stall restroom

Any alternative arrangement should be provided in a way that protects the person's ability to keep their transgender status confidential

No one should not be required to use a locker room or restroom that conflicts with their gender identity

C. Transportation

For the health and safety of all participants, the following practices shall be followed:

- For events that originate and/or terminate at an ECMN event locations, and at local church and institutional properties, all drivers (except immediate parents/guardians) must be at least 21 years of age and provide proof of insurance and a current driver's license, a completed volunteer driver information form, and have a satisfactory DMV records check.
- All drivers and riders must comply with state laws including seat belt and cell phone usage.
- Parents/guardians are responsible for the transportation and safety of their children and/or youth to and from the event. This responsibility includes the transportation of any other passengers in their vehicle.

D. Travel

The following policies will help groups prepare for a variety of potential scenarios, as well as for domestic and international travel.

- **Adult Leaders and Chaperones**
 - Minimum ratios of adult to youth need to be greater due to the possibility of leaving an adult behind with a participant in the event of a medical emergency.
 - 9–14 years — 1:5
 - 15–18 years — 1:7
 - Regardless of group size, no group should travel (domestically or abroad) with fewer than three adult chaperones.
 - One adult, minimum age 25, should serve as the travel administrator who is responsible for all aspects of the trip, including carrying all necessary documentation, contacts, and forms including:
 - medical releases for each participant
 - community covenant of participants of all ages;
 - emergency contacts;
 - itineraries; and
 - cash and/or credit card capacity to address emergencies.
 - It is a best practice that, one adult, minimum age 25, should hold a current medical certification to manage administration of necessary and permissible medications, administer immediate and necessary first aid, and triage medical situations to determine if care of an individual needs to be taken to a higher level of care. When this is not possible, one person should be designated to supervise the administration of medications as instructed on medical release forms, and a clinic near your destination should be identified ahead of time in order to respond to health emergencies as rapidly as possible.
 - Possible medical certifications include:

- First AID/CPR
- Wilderness Medical Response
- Outdoor Emergency Care
- Emergency Medical Technician/Paramedic
- Nurse — RN/LPN/Nurse Practitioner
- Physician’s Assistant
- Medical Doctor
- Best practice is to designate an adult to serve as back-up to the travel administrator, and as back-up for simple first aid and administration of prescriptions. These could be the same person.
- A copy of all documents should be left with an accountable person at the faith community. That person should also serve as the local emergency contact person for communications between the traveling group and families at home.
- **Insurance for Travel**
 - ECMN encourages that all travel is covered by appropriate insurance. Coverage must be adequate to every reasonable possibility, including but not limited to: medical, evacuation, collision, property, etc.
 - It is recommended that all travelers carry evidence of personal health insurance by virtue of a copy of the actual card provided to the insured person.
 - Because not all individuals have access to affordable and adequate health insurance, it is recommended that health insurance be added to trip insurance.
- **International Considerations**
 - Check in with the U.S. Department of State on travel requirements, including visas.
 - For international trips originating and returning to the United States of America, make certain that every traveler’s passport is valid for at least six months beyond your return date and that each traveler has an original valid passport or proof of permanent residency or other document entitling that traveler to return to the United States
 - Determine whether or not vaccinations are required and/or recommended for entry into specific countries and ensure compliance
 - Arrange to have at least two cell phones with the group that will have active coverage in your destination(s). Make a back-up plan for communication with your Responsible Person at home.