

Policy to Protect Children and Youth in the Episcopal Diocese of El Camino Real: Executive Summary and Synopsis of Policy

The purpose of the Policy to Protect Children and Youth is self-evident. Primary to the Christian call to encourage children and youth in spiritual formation is the need to create a safe environment in which to grow. In order to create a cohesive policy for all church leaders, paid and volunteer, who work with children and youth, it is necessary to adopt a policy that not only meets requirements for risk management and church insurance, but which meets a standard of care representative of our Christian commitment to "love God and love neighbor." This policy is based on the "Model Policies for Protection of Children and Youth" created by the Church Pension Fund, National Episcopal Church, and is to be a guide followed by all Episcopal Church leaders and volunteers in the Diocese of El Camino Real.

Below is a summary of the key points of the Policy to Protect Children and Youth. This "summary" is to be used in conjunction with the larger, more complete document, which offers details regarding "Definitions; "Safeguards for Children and Youth", "Responding to Problems" and an Appendix that offers guidelines for appropriate affection, confidential notice of concern, application, code of conduct, acknowledgement, release and signature forms, a sample nursery care sign-in sheet, and liturgical resource material.

- All clergy and all persons who regularly work in a 1:1 relationship with children and youth shall be screened and selected utilizing the system adopted by the Diocese (see item A.1)
- All who occasionally work with or around children or youth shall be screened and selected utilizing the system adopted by the Diocese (see item A.2)
- A minimum standard of screening is available through "Group Resources"; also available for free online, "registered sex offenders" www.meganslaw.ca.gov
- All persons who work regularly one on one with children or youth will attend child abuse prevention training approved by the Ecclesiastical Authority (see item B.1)
- It is recommended that persons who work regularly one on one with youth or children attend a minimum of three (3) hours of child abuse prevention training; those who work occasionally one on one with youth or children attend a minimum of One (1) hour of child abuse training. Training is available in Spanish as well as English. It is recommended that training be made available free to all persons who work and/or volunteer time with children and/or youth. [Recommended 1 hour, parish training, using "Anglican Church of Canada, Diocese of Toronto VIDEO: Sexual Misconduct in Our Churches; available through Diocesan Resource Center]
- Church Personnel who are responsible for screening, selection and supervision of others in programs for children and youth are required to complete an additional three (3) hours of specialized education and training in screening, selection and monitoring every two (2) years.
- Each parish or mission will maintain current list of persons who have been screened and trained to work with children; it is recommended that a Diocesan-wide list be maintained also.
- Whenever possible at least two (2) unrelated persons supervise activities with children and youth.
- No person will be allowed to volunteer to regularly work with children or youth until the person has been known to the clergy and congregation for at least 6 months and has been screened and trained, unless they always work directly with experienced church personnel.
- If a church volunteer working with children and/or youth has not been screened and/or trained in child abuse prevention, that person should be supervised by someone who has been screened and trained.
- Those who work regularly with children and youth will have regular conversations with appropriate supervisor such as clergy person, youth minister, Sunday School Director or youth/children advisory committee.
- Rector (or canonical equivalent)-approved and congregation-sponsored programs for youth and children activities are to be made known and available to church members.
- If Church Personnel observe any inappropriate behaviors that violate the Guidelines for Appropriate Affection, or other provisions of the Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth, they must immediately report their observations. (See section III, "Responding to Problems")