

Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis
(Adopted by Executive Council 6/13/09)

Policies for the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation of Adults

INTRODUCTION

Relationships among people are at the foundation of Christian ministry and as such are central to the life of the church. Defining healthy and safe relationships through policies and codes of conduct is not meant, in any way, to undermine the strength and importance of personal interaction in our ministries. Rather, it is to assist in more clearly defining behaviors and practices that allow the church to more fully demonstrate its love and compassion in sincere and genuine relationships which will always be experienced as caring and without allowing harm to occur.

Because sexual exploitation involves the misuse of power by those in positions of authority, it is the church's responsibility to ensure that persons in positions of authority are trustworthy.

Prevention is important because an organization which serves those who are most vulnerable may attract individuals who seek inappropriate sexual gratification with others. Accordingly, the Church has a responsibility to all of its members to distinguish between the many sincere and faithful adult servants, and the few who violate the trust placed in them.

The policies contained herein offer guidance for The Diocese of Indianapolis as well as the congregations and institutions of the diocese as they seek to establish and maintain standards for their clergy, employees and lay people in order to keep all church members safe. Such standards are essential for establishing parameters of propriety to guide the Church in its work.

HISTORY OF MODEL POLICIES FOR THE PREVENTION OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF ADULTS

In 1991, General Convention passed Resolution B052 (see Supporting Documents) in which it declared that sexual abuse, exploitation, coercion, and harassment of adults and minors by clergy and church employees are abuses of trust, a violation of the Baptismal Covenant, contrary to Christian Character, and are therefore wrong.

The 2006 General Convention adopted Resolution A156 (see Supporting Documents). Every diocese is now required to adopt policies to protect adults from sexual exploitation and church workers from sexual harassment.

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION POLICY

PROHIBITION AGAINST SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

The Diocese of Indianapolis and its constituent congregations and institutions does not tolerate sexual exploitation in any form. Sexual exploitation is the development or attempted development of a sexual relationship between a person in any ministerial position, lay or ordained, and an individual with whom he or she has a Pastoral Relationship.

A PASTORAL RELATIONSHIP IS A RELATIONSHIP:

Between any clergy person and any person:

- who attends a congregation or other ministry setting in which the clergy person serves;
- who seeks ministry from the clergy person

OR

Between any clergy person or any duly-appointed lay person, whether employee or volunteer, who is authorized to provide and does provide:

- counseling;
- pastoral care;
- spiritual direction or spiritual guidance;
- ministration of any Sacrament (other than the distribution of the Bread and Wine by a lay person at a public service of Holy Communion);
- life/leadership/peer coaching;
- hearing a person's confession, in the course of the duly-authorized ministry

OR

The following ministers licensed under Canon III.4: Pastoral Leaders, Worship Leaders, Preachers, Eucharistic Visitors, and Catechists and those they serve in the course of these ministries.

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION INCLUDES BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS:

VERBAL:

- such as sexual innuendo, indecent proposals, sharing sexual stories, jokes or fantasies, or making inappropriate comments about someone's appearance.

BEHAVIORS:

- such as inappropriate touching, sending or posting communications with sexual content (correspondence, email, text messages, instant messages, photographs, attachments, phone conversations, voice mail, etc.)
- sexualizing a pastoral relationship or relationship between a clergy or lay person and anyone to whom he or she provides ministry (e.g., proposing or engaging in sexual intercourse or sexual contact, requesting dates, giving unwanted attention, etc.).

REPORTING SUSPECTED SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

If you believe that you or someone else has been subjected to sexual exploitation, actions that violate this policy or inappropriate behavior, you may make your concerns known to the offending person if you are comfortable doing so, or you may report your concerns in accordance with the following:

Reports of suspected or known sexual exploitation may be reported to:

- the rector or clergy person in charge of the congregation

- the Senior Warden of the congregation
- the bishop (or other designated person in the diocese)

Via any of the following:

- Telephone call
- Letter
- Email
- Fax
- In-person meeting
- (see Supporting Documents)

Church Personnel are required to report any suspected or known policy violations to the rector or clergy person in charge of the congregation.

All reports of sexual exploitation, policy violations, or inappropriate behavior under this policy will be taken seriously.

GENERAL DEFINITIONS

A. CHURCH PERSONNEL

- All clergy whether stipendiary, non-stipendiary, or otherwise who are engaged in ministry or service to the church.
- All paid personnel whether employed in areas of ministry or other kinds of services by the diocese, its congregations, schools or other agencies.
- Those who contract their services to the diocese, its congregations, schools, or other agencies.
- Volunteers, including any person who enters into or offers him or herself for a church related service, or who actually assists with or performs a service, whether or not they have been selected or assigned to do so. Volunteers include, but are not limited to, members of advisory boards, Vestries, Bishop's Committees, boards of directors and advisory boards.

B. PERSONS WHO HAVE PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS

For purposes of this policy, the following Church Personnel are included in the definition of Persons Who Have Pastoral Relationships:

- All clergy whether stipendiary, non-stipendiary, or otherwise.
- All persons who have Pastoral Relationships.
- The following ministers licensed under Canon III.
- Pastoral Leaders, Worship Leaders, Preachers, Eucharistic Visitors, and Catechists.

C. SUPERVISORS AND DECISION-MAKERS

- All persons who supervise Persons Who Have Pastoral Relationships.
- All members of decision-making bodies which have the authority to approve the creation of ministries, programs, church activities, or policies involving Pastoral Relationships
- Standing Committees, Diocesan Councils/Executive Boards, Vestries, and Bishop's Committees who appoint or approve Persons Who Have Pastoral Relationships as defined in this policy including, but not limited to, Commissions on Ministry, and Boards of Directors for Schools.

SAFEGUARDS FOR PREVENTING SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF ADULTS

A. SCREENING AND SELECTION

Any and all Persons Who Have Pastoral Relationships shall be screened and selected using the following tools and procedures:

Persons Who Have Pastoral Relationships shall be screened before engaging in Pastoral Relationships.

- Applicants shall be known to the leadership of the congregation for at least six (6) months to a year.

Background Screening

- o An **Application** form (or church deployment form) completed by the applicant that includes an authorization for the release of information to conduct background screening and reference checks and that also includes the **Code of Conduct** (see Supporting Documents)
 - o **Criminal Records Check** for people who will be working with vulnerable adults in the home of the vulnerable adult in any state where the applicant has resided during the past seven (7) years, and other states, if any, as determined by the congregation or diocese.
 - o **Sexual Offender Registry Check** in any state where the applicant has resided during the past seven (7) years.
 - o **Individual Interview** with the applicant.
 - o **Reference Checks** of applicants should include at least one relative outside the congregation and at least one other person outside the congregation.
- All information gathered about an applicant will be carefully reviewed and evaluated to make a determination, in consultation with others as necessary, of whether or not the person is appropriate to engage in Pastoral Relationships.
 - Persons Who Have Pastoral Relationships must have a personnel file that is kept where other church records are kept.
 - Sexual offender registry checks will be conducted every five (5) years on Persons Who Have Pastoral Relationships.
 - Persons Who Have Pastoral Relationships who transfer within the Diocese of Indianapolis and apply for or are asked to or who do undertake a position in which they have Pastoral Relationships are required to undergo the same screening and selection process specified above. This requirement may be met through a transfer of a copy of their personnel file to the new congregation, school, agency, or program together with completion of a new application, individual interview and reference checks with the congregations, schools, agencies or other programs for which the applicant has had Pastoral Relationships since the screening was last done as shown in the applicant's personnel file.

B. EDUCATION AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Persons Who Have Pastoral Relationships:

Before any person engages in Pastoral Relationships s/he is required to complete training on the prevention of sexual exploitation of adults. If that is not possible, this policy must be reviewed and discussed with her/him before s/he has Pastoral Relationships. The rest of the education and training must be completed within three months of beginning to have Pastoral Relationships. Persons engaging in Pastoral Relationships must refresh their training and recertify at least every three years.

Supervisors and Decision-Makers of Persons Who Have Pastoral Relationships:

Within three months of becoming a Supervisor or Decision-Maker, individuals must complete training on the prevention of sexual exploitation of adults. Persons engaging in Pastoral Relationships must refresh their training and recertify at least every three years.

C. ACTIVITIES FOR MONITORING AND SUPERVISING PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS

The monitoring and supervision of programs and activities involving Pastoral Relationships is important for safeguarding adults from sexual exploitation. Monitoring and supervision should include, but are not limited to:

- Maintaining an up to date list of approved Persons Who Have Pastoral Relationships in the church office or other place where church records are kept.
- Requiring that all new activities that include Pastoral Relationships have the approval of the rector or canonical equivalent before they start. Requests to develop new activities should be submitted in writing to the rector. The rector will consider whether the plan for a new activity includes adequate monitoring and supervision.
- Requiring that all Persons Who Have Pastoral Relationships be approved to do so by the rector or canonical equivalent in accordance with the Screening and Selection process above.

Settings where Pastoral Relationships take place:

- should, whenever possible, be places where casual monitoring by others is convenient (for example along well-traveled hallways or in areas where other Church Personnel work nearby)
- in open, visible spaces or in closed spaces that have windows that remain unobstructed by closed blinds, furniture, plants, or other adornments
- should convey safety and comfort without the use of couches, loveseats, beds, futons or other furniture that would encourage close seating between the persons in the Pastoral Relationship

D. BEHAVIORAL GUIDELINES FOR THE PREVENTION OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF ADULTS

When creating safe boundaries for Persons Who Have Pastoral Relationships, it is important to establish what types of interactions are appropriate and inappropriate. Stating which behaviors are appropriate and inappropriate allows Church Personnel to comfortably show positive affection in ministry, and yet identify individuals who are not maintaining safe boundaries with other adults.

GUIDELINES FOR APPROPRIATE INTERACTION WITH ADULTS

- are based, in large part, on avoiding behaviors known to be used by those who have engaged in sexual exploitation of adults
- are intended to assist Church Personnel and Congregants in monitoring and supervising behaviors and interactions of Persons Who Have Pastoral Relationships to help maintain appropriate boundaries at all times
- are intended to be used to make decisions about interactions of Persons Who Have Pastoral Relationships with those with whom they have a Pastoral Relationship
- are to be carefully followed by all who are involved in Pastoral Relationships

Some **appropriate** interactions, as long as they are welcomed by the recipient, are listed below:

- brief hugs
- pats on the shoulder or back
- kisses on the cheek
- handshakes
- holding hands during prayer

Some **inappropriate** interactions in Pastoral Relationships and other ministries with adults include:

- inappropriate or lengthy embraces
- kisses on the mouth
- touching sexual areas of the body
- showing affection while in isolated areas such as bedrooms, closets, staff-only areas or other private rooms
- any form of unwanted affection
- comments or compliments (spoken, written, or electronic) that relate to a person's body or appearance that are at all suggestive. Examples would be, "You should wear that outfit more often," or "You look really hot in those jeans."
- giving gifts or money to favored individuals
- repeated and/or private meetings with individual adults, especially meetings that occur away from church property and during non-business hours
- repeated electronic communications, such as email or texts, especially those that contain personal disclosures or solicitations of an intimate relationship
- seeking excessive private time with a specific adult
- changing one's manner of dress when in the company of a specific adult
- providing a specific adult with personal access such as one's personal email address or cell phone number if that is not the norm