

# CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION POLICY

## I. POLICY

- A. It is the policy of Saint Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church to provide protection of minors from abuse. Saint Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church will not tolerate any abuse. Determination of abuse will result in the termination of a staff person or rescission of any volunteer's approval for participation with minors.
- B. Any SMAA adult, whether ordained, lay staff or volunteer who comes in direct contact with minors during an SMAA sanctioned activity must be approved under Section II below.
- C. At least two (2) approved adults must supervise or lead all activities involving minors.
  - 1. Exception: there may be less than two (2) approved adults at times of emergency or extraordinary circumstances.
  - 2. Door must remain open if only one (1) adult is present.
- D. Two (2) adults must stay with last child that is being picked up from an event.

## II. REQUIREMENTS FOR APPROVAL

- A. Pass a criminal background investigation every five (5) years if still an active volunteer.
- B. Attend church or diocesan sponsored training
- C. Approved adults will be classified in one of the following categories:
  - 1. active SMAA member<sup>1</sup> for over one (1) year
  - 2. active SMAA member<sup>1</sup> for less than one (1) year
  - 3. non-member of SMAA
  - 4. paid staff

Note: volunteers in category c2 or c3 above will be paired with adults in category c1 or c4.

## III. APPROVAL PROCESS

- A. To be approved, adults must complete and sign a Confidential Information Application Form which includes providing references and agreeing to a criminal background investigation.

Notes: (1) any indictment of an offense or conviction for crimes listed in the Confidential Application Form disqualifies a person from participating in any activity or program involving children or youth; disposition of any such application will be processed by the Parish Administrator; (2) references *ordinarily* will not be checked for persons who have been active members of SMAA for two (2) years or more; (3) for a drivers check application form if any indictment of an offense or conviction has happened within the last five (5) years that person will be disqualified to drive any child or youth to a SMAA sponsored function.
- B. Adults must also participate in professionally led training to provide orientation, education on conduct of approved volunteers.

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<sup>1</sup> An SMAA member is defined as having been baptized or confirmed at Saint Michael or having had a letter of transfer (confirmation) from another Episcopal parish received by Saint Michael.

#### **IV. SUPERVISION AND ADMINISTRATION**

- A. This policy will be implemented and enforced under the direction of the Rector and the clergy or staff responsible for programs involving children and youth. Specific procedures for implementing the policy will be adapted as appropriate to the various activities involved in each ministry. (For example, badges may be needed in one activity to identify approved volunteers while not in another.)
- B. A Child Abuse Protection Policy Committee (CAPP), consisting of staff and lay volunteers, will assist the Rector and ministry heads, as the Rector may direct with:
  - 1. Coordination of procedures that are common to all departments and those that are specific to each department.
  - 2. Training
  - 3. Oversight of the implementation and enforcement of this policy and the supporting procedures, including proposals for changes as may be required.

#### **V. REPORTING ALLEGATIONS**

- A. Any person who witnesses abusive conduct must report it immediately. Any failure to do so is considered a violation of policy. Examples of inappropriate behaviors include but are not limited to: seeking private time with children or youth, taking children or youth on over-night trips without other adults, or swearing or making suggestive comments to children or youth.
- B. As required by state law, anyone who personally witnesses an occurrence in violation of policy must complete a Confidential Incident Report Form.
- C. Completed Confidential Incident Report Forms as well as all questions or concerns of any suspected abusive behavior or harassment shall be directed to the Rector or Vice Rector, the Parish Administrator, Youth Director, Director of Children and Family Ministry, Director of Child Development or the Choir Director as appropriate.
- D. If any person who witnesses abusive conduct refuses to complete the Confidential Incident Report Form, the person initially contacted by the witness must complete a Confidential Incident Report Form.
- E. Legally and pastorally, the integrity of the reporting process is dependent upon all information relating to the abusive conduct remaining strictly confidential. Persons involved in reporting abusive conduct must keep all information in strictest confidence.

#### **VI. RESPONSE TO ALLEGATIONS**

- A. An alleged violation will be immediately referred to a Response Team.
- B. A Response Team appointed by the Rector will comprise at least:
  - 1. the Parish Administrator
  - 2. The Senior Warden or other Vestry member
  - 3. an attorney for the Church
  - 4. the appropriate Director from the Youth, CFM, Child Development or Music
  - 5. a member of the Clergy
- C. The Response Team will report to law enforcement authorities as required by law and take other appropriate action to carry out the purpose of this policy.
- D. The Response Team will report to the Executive Committee of the Vestry its finding and that Executive Committee will make final disposition of incident.

## VII. VIOLATION OF POLICY

- A. Any person who is subject of a submitted Confidential Incident Report Form will be suspended automatically from any further participation in any children and youth activities and programs of SMAA. Suspensions shall continue until a disposition of “unfounded allegation” has been made by the Vestry Executive Committee.
- B. Abuse is grounds for rescission of approved volunteer status or termination of staff.
- C. Any consumption of alcohol or drugs or being under the influence of alcohol or drugs while participating in a program or activity of SMAA designed for minors is considered grounds for rescindment of approved status.
- D. If a majority of the Vestry Executive Committee believes **from the evidence that said person has exhibited abusive behavior**, such person shall be prohibited from future participation in all children and youth activities and programs of SMAA.
- E. The Vestry Executive Committee may report the matter to the Vestry in a closed executive session.