

Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth

St. Barnabas Episcopal Church, Bay Village, Ohio

This policy will be posted in areas where activities for children and/or youth occur, will be given to all adults who regularly work with children or youth, and will be given to parents/guardians of children and youth. When distributing this policy, St. Barnabas will direct parents/guardians to inform their children and youth of the guidelines for the safe interaction with children and youth found in Section IV. below and such other elements of this policy as each such parent/guardian deems appropriate to share with their child(ren) and youth.

I. Introduction

The aim of this policy is to make our church a safe place: safe for the children and youth entrusted to our care, and safe for those who are responsible for our children and youth. This policy reinforces the promises made in our Baptismal Covenant to respect the dignity of every human being.

II. Screening and Selection for Ministry with Children and Youth

1. St. Barnabas requires background checks for all employees. Background checks will include the following: a.) satisfactory completion of a written application, b.) a public records check, c.) an interview by the Rector or Priest in Charge, and d.) reference checks. Employees must have up-to-date certification in the Episcopal Diocese of Ohio's designated training, Safeguarding God's Children.
2. Unpaid volunteers who have regular contact with children or youth (i.e. Sunday School teachers, youth leaders, music leaders, etc.) will complete an application satisfactorily and be subject to a public records check. Regular volunteers must have up-to-date certification in Safeguarding God's Children.
3. No volunteers will be permitted to work with children or youth until they have been known to the clergy or congregation for at least six months. Volunteers must have up-to-date certification in Safeguarding God's Children.

III. Behavioral Standards for Ministry with Children and Youth

1. Adults shall never, under any circumstances: provide children or youth with non-sacramental alcohol, tobacco or nicotine products, marijuana, illegal drugs, or pornography.
2. Adults shall not consume non-sacramental alcohol, use illegal drugs, use marijuana, or misuse other legal drugs at any children's or youth event.
3. Adults shall not be under the influence of alcohol, marijuana, illegal drugs, or misuse legal drugs at any children's or youth event; engage in illegal behavior or permit other adults, children, or youth to engage in illegal behavior; engage in any sexual, romantic, illicit, or secretive relationship or conduct with any child or youth; discuss their own sexual activities or fantasies with children or youth; or threaten others for exposing violations of behavioral standards.

4. Neither adults nor children or youth may possess firearms or other weapons at any children or youth activity.

IV. Monitoring Programs and Interactions with Children and Youth

1. Except as provided in the paragraph immediately below, events and ministries for children and youth must include at least two unrelated adults (meaning: not members of the same nuclear family) present at all times.
2. When taking place during church services or other parish-sponsored gatherings on parish premises, it may be appropriate for a children's or youth class/gathering to have only one teacher or adult volunteer if:
 - a. at least two unrelated children or youth are also present; and
 - b. any such class/gathering takes place in a location that is well-monitored, visually accessible, and subject to random visual check-ins by at least one other adult not of the same nuclear family as the teacher/adult volunteer.
3. Any new programs, trips, or events that involve children or youth must be given prior approval by the Rector or Priest-in-Charge.
4. Except as may be necessary in an emergency situation, adults who work with children or youth within the parish should not individually contact any children or youth individually by phone call, cell, text or email without also including the parent/guardian of such child or youth in the communication. In the event an adult who works with children or youth within the parish has an independently developed, parent/guardian-sanctioned relationship with a child or youth of the parish (such as an aunt, uncle, cousin or coach), communications in the context of that independent relationship are outside the scope of this policy.
5. Photos and videos of children or youth at parish-sponsored children or youth events or ministries shall only be taken by adult volunteers for the purpose of sharing with clergy and lay employees (who may, as permitted, share them on parish-sponsored email and social media accounts). No other photos or videos of children or youth shall be taken, stored or distributed by adult volunteers who are not the parent/guardian of such child(ren) or youth.
6. Parish computers, smart televisions, and other electronics must have adequate password protection. If occasion arises for a child or youth to use a parish computer, they must be monitored at all times by an adult and the above stated location and numerosity requirements will apply.
7. Any request for one-to-one counseling by clergy, lay employees or adult volunteers with children or youth must be brought to the attention of the Rector or Priest in Charge and will only be done in an open or public or other space where private conversations are possible but occur in full view of others and if off-site, in a public setting with pre-approval by the Rector or Priest in Charge. Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed if a child or youth discloses a situation pertaining to abuse, neglect, self-harm, or exploitation because of mandatory reporting laws—See Section VI. below "Responding to Concerns" in the event of such disclosures.

V. Education and Training

1. St. Barnabas will direct clergy, lay employees, and volunteers who work with children or youth to maintain up-to-date certification in Safeguarding God's Children, as defined by the Diocese of Ohio. They will also be directed to review and comply with the Diocese of Ohio's Policy for the Protection of Children and Youth and provided with a copy or a link to the same.
2. St. Barnabas will direct clergy, lay employees, and volunteers who work with children or youth and parents/guardians of such children and youth to inform their child(ren) and youth about the Policy for the Protection of Children and Youth and specifically the interaction guidelines set forth in Section IV. above.

VI. Responding to Concerns

1. Anyone who knows of a violation of any policies must immediately report the violation to the Rector or Priest-in-Charge, who must inform the Wardens of the parish within 48 hours. If the violation involves the Rector or Priest-in Charge, the violation should be reported directly to the Wardens, whose contact information is found in the weekly bulletin or can be obtained by calling the parish office at 440-871-6200.
2. When applicable, the St. Barnabas *Sexual Misconduct Policies and Procedures* will be followed. This includes standards for diocesan involvement in matters of sexual misconduct and the mandatory reporting of sexual abuse to civil authorities. Any accusation of sexual abuse of a minor must be immediately reported to the Cuyahoga County Child Abuse Hotline at 216-696-5437.
3. Violations of these policies that do not fall under the St. Barnabas *Sexual Misconduct Policies and Procedures* will be dealt with at the discretion of the Rector/Priest-in-Charge in consultation with the Wardens of the parish.

*Approved by the Vestry of St. Barnabas Episcopal Church on September 8, 2019
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