



The Episcopal Diocese of Texas

*Diocesan Policies
For the Protection of Children and Youth
from Abuse*

Administrator's Manual

2009 Revision

How to Use This Manual

The Administrator's Manual is intended to help you manage your Safeguarding records. If you already have a system for managing those records, you do not need to revise your system to comply with the format presented in the Manual. Likewise, if you have developed procedures that enable you to comply with the screening, training, file maintenance and monitoring requirements of the *Diocesan Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse*, continue to follow those procedures.

Please read through the first eight (8) pages of this manual to be sure you are maintaining your *Safeguarding* files in accord with our *Safeguarding* policies.

Please be sure that all of the items required to fully certify an individual are included in their volunteer or employee personnel file (see page four (4)).

Should you choose to use them, the Volunteer Personnel Application Packet and the Employed Personnel Application Packet contain all of the documents and information needed for an individual to complete their *Safeguarding* certification. You will need to copy and hand out *The Handbook for Those Who Work with Children and Youth*

If you have developed your own application forms or reference call questions and documentation forms, be sure you have sent copies to the Safe Church office to have them approved by our attorney.

If, at any time, you have any questions about *Safeguarding*, or need assistance in any way, please do not hesitate to call or email the Safe Church Office, 512-478-0580 or csmith@epicenter.org

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Why We Have These Policies

Through baptism we share a common life of faith, a life of service and servanthood, a life rooted in love and faithfulness. We promise at every baptism to strive for justice and peace among all people and to respect the dignity of every human being.

These promises call us to assure that our churches are safe places for all God's children. They commit us to our highest and best efforts in our common life, including the care and safety of our children and youth. This policy is a response to OUR baptismal promises.

All who are employed by the Diocese of Texas, its churches, schools and diocesan entities, volunteer staff and all who work with children or youth will be asked to agree to and will be bound by *The Diocesan Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse*.

Responsibility for Administration

The Heads of the Congregation, the Heads of School, Executive Directors or any other person serving in these or equivalent roles in diocesan institutions are directly responsible to the Bishop for the implementation and administration of the policies and procedures outlined in *The Diocesan Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse*.

The implementation and/or administration of these policies and procedures may be delegated to another staff member or volunteer, but the ultimate responsibility may not be delegated. Supervision of these administrative processes by the Head of the Congregation, Head of School, Executive Director, etc., is required to assure appropriate compliance and confidentiality.

Anyone who administers ***The Diocesan Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse*** must have received the ***Safeguarding God's Children*** training and have the results of a completed background check in their personnel file.

It is essential that the administrator of these policies have a current copy of the policies on hand and be extensively familiar with the policies and procedures in order to make appropriate decisions about their application in the local ministry setting. The Administrator is to contact the Rev. Cecilia Smith, Safe Church Minister, (csmith@epicenter.org or 512-478-0580) at any time for clarification of the policies or guidance in applying them.

When there are special needs or extenuating circumstances, a one-time exemption or a specific exception may be made to a policy *with the approval of the Head of church, school or institution in consultation with the Safe Church Minister and with the approval of the Bishop's office*.

Personnel Files

Each paid staff person, volunteer staff person of any church, school or diocesan entity, and volunteers who work with children or youth must have a personnel file. These files are to be kept in locked cabinets in the church, school, or entity office under the control of the Head of the Congregation, Head of School or diocesan entity. The contents of each file must include:

- Completed application (for paid personnel or volunteer personnel, all parts)
- Background check release and result (nationwide criminal and sex offender record)
- Notes from applicant's personal interview
- Written results of Reference calls
- Copy of **Safeguarding God's Children** training certificate
- Initialed and signed Code of Conduct wherein they agree to abide by the *Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse*
- Signed Acknowledgement and Release form indicating that they have received and reviewed *Handbook for Those Who Work with Children or Youth* and have given permission for reference checks and background checks

If appropriate to their position and tasks:

- Credit history
- Driving record

This information is highly confidential and must be appropriately handled. Only those administering these policies and procedures should have access to these documents. Only when the file is complete will an individual be fully certified as "Safeguarded."

Some background check companies and DPS may require that the release for check and the results of the check be kept in a separate locked file to which only the person requesting the search has access. Please be sure you are complying with any such requirement.

ITEMS TO BE COMPLETED AND INCLUDED IN EACH PERSON'S PERSONNEL FILE

Record Keeping

To help with your record keeping, a check list of all items and tasks to be completed before an individual is fully *Safeguarded* may be found in the *Administrator's Document Packet* in the next section. The order in which the items below appear is the suggested order of completion. All *Safeguarding* personnel files must be kept and archived indefinitely by the church, school or diocesan entity even after an individual no longer works with children or youth or is a member of or works at the church, school or diocesan entity.

Individuals who transfer within the Diocese of Texas and apply for, who are asked, or who do undertake positions working with or around children or youth are required to undergo the same screening and selection process. This requirement may be met through a transfer of a copy of the personnel file to the new church, school or diocesan entity or program and the completion of:

- A new application
- An individual interview
- Reference checks with the churches, schools, diocesan entities or programs for which the applicant has worked with or around children or youth since the screening was last done as shown in the applicant's personnel file
- Background check if theirs is more than 2 years old

Individuals who transfer from Episcopal congregations outside the Diocese of Texas may transfer their *Safeguarding God's Children* training certificates.

Application, Code of Conduct, Acknowledgement

There are two different applications packets provided in this manual:

- One for paid personnel
- One for volunteer personnel.

Please be sure to use the appropriate application packet and be sure that all portions of the application are completed. **Application packets** include:

1. The application form
2. *Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children and Youth*
3. *Acknowledgement, Release, and Signature.*
4. Background Check Release form
5. Information on registering for *Safeguarding* training

All of the above items are organized as packets – one for employees, one for volunteers – in the next section of this handbook. The *Administrator's Document Packet* contains a guide for reference calls and personal interviews, forms upon which to document the calls and interviews, documents for background checks, and detailed training information. You will need to give them, separately, a copy of *Handbook for Those Who Work with Children or Youth*.

Applications

Review the completed application and be alert to:

- “Job hopping” or jobs that show excessive or exclusive involvement in programs, organization or activities in which children are served.
- Gaps in a work record – clarify this in the interview
- Vague or ambiguous responses to the questions on the application – ask for clarity in the interview

Personal Interviews

When you have received the individual's application, review it, make the reference calls (see below) and arrange time for a personal interview. The forms on which to document the interview are found in the *Administrator's Document Packet* in the next section.

At the time of the personal interview, be sure the individual has their copy of *Handbook for Those Who Work with Children and Youth*, review the policies and report procedures with them. Once this is done, they may sign/initial the *Code of Conduct* and *Acknowledgement* and return them to be placed in their personnel file .

References Calls

References must be checked. Careful checking of references is the first opportunity to keep child molesters from gaining access to children. Checking references serves to underscore the significance of child abuse prevention in your congregation, school, or diocesan entity and usually provides you with pertinent information about the applicant.

- Call references and explain that you were given their name by the applicant who desires employment or a volunteer position in your congregation, school, or diocesan entity that would require them to work with or be in contact with children or youth.
- Be alert to information a reference will not give or comment upon in response to a question

The forms in the *Administrator's Document Packet* may be copied and used for your calls. You should have one set for each of the three reference calls you will make. If any of the responses cause you concern, flag those to check further or to speak about with the applicant.

When completed, the forms should be placed in the individual's volunteer or employee personnel file. If, due to the results of the background or reference check of the personal interview, the individual is not hired or accepted as a volunteer, retain their information in a file flagged "application denied."

Background Checks

Background checks should cover the applicant's history for at least ten (10) years. They must be re-run every five (5) years at the time a person takes *Safeguarding* recertification training.

Who Gets Background Checks:

All paid personnel; volunteer staff; volunteers who work with children and youth:

The minimum background check requirement is:

- A nationwide criminal background and sex offender check.
- If the individual will have financial responsibility, a credit check must also be ordered
- If the individual will transport children in a vehicle, a driving record check must be ordered.

Exception for parents of children in the program: Parents who assist *no more* than six (6) times a year with a program in which *their* child is enrolled, including providing transportation, are exempt from these background check and training requirements. It is strongly suggested that you provide them with a copy of *The Handbook for those Who Work with Children or Youth* and review it with them.

How to Get Background Checks:

Each congregation, school, or diocesan entity may select its provider of choice for background checks. However, they must be assured that the background check is capable of doing a nationwide search of criminal and sex offender registries. As a service, the Diocese has a contract with a provider and can order checks on your behalf (*Infoquest*), or you may set up your own accounts with *Intellicorp* (there is a link to them on the Safe Church site on the diocesan web site, www.epicenter.org) or *Choice Point* (contact Cecilia Smith, csmith@epicenter.org (512-478-0580) for contact information).

If you wish the Diocese to order a Background Check, send a copy of the *Background Check Release Form*, completed and signed by the applicant, to: Background Check, Episcopal Diocese Of Texas,, 1225 Texas Ave., Houston, TX 77002. These forms are included in the Application Packets and in the Administrator's Document Packet or you may download one from the Diocesan website at www.epicenter.org. Click on Safe Church Ministries. The Safeguarding God's Children, then Background Checks. Background checks ordered on your behalf by the Diocese will be mailed or faxed by the provider to your office, along with an invoice for your payment. The Diocese does not receive the results of the background check and therefore has no record of the result. Please provide for appropriate confidentiality in the receipt and handling of the background check results.

Only those administering these policies and procedures should have access to these documents. See on page 4.

How to Evaluate and File the Background Checks

The background check release form and a hard copy of the results of the check are to be placed in the individual's personnel file or in a separate locked file accessed only by the person designated to access it. The checks must be repeated every 5th year as long as an individual is employed or working with children and youth.

If the check reveals a conviction for a sexual or violent offense, the applicant is not allowed to work with children or youth. Notify the head of church or school or diocesan institution who in turn must notify the Canon to the Ordinary (the Rev. Canon Ann Normand, EDOT, 1225 Texas Ave, Houston TX 77002; 713-520-6444).

Convictions for minor offenses are usually not sufficient to deny an individual employment or a volunteer position. If you receive notice of a conviction or are uncertain how to interpret the search results, please consult the Rev. Cecilia Smith, Safe Church Minister for assistance.

Training for Safeguarding God's Children

Safeguarding God's Children: Preventing Child Sexual Abuse is the only training program approved by the Diocese of Texas. Training classes are scheduled through the Safe Church Ministry office in Austin and are posted on the diocesan web site (www.epicenter.org) on the Safe Church pages. Once the individual has completed training and it is processed in the Safe Church Office, the church, school or diocesan entity which required them to take the training will receive a certificate of completion of training. A copy is to be made and given to the individual and a copy is to be placed in their personnel file.

Details on registering for training are included in the application packets. If an individual has difficulty locating a training site, contact the Safe Church Ministry office for assistance.

Certification is good for 5 years at which time it must be repeated and a new background check must be run.

Detailed training information is in the Administrator's Document Packet, page 5.

Time Frame for Completion of Required Items

Before beginning ministry with children or youth, volunteer or employed personnel must have completed the application process, including reference checks, and they must have received a copy of *the Handbook for those who Work with Children or Youth*.

It is desirable that ***Safeguarding God's Children*** training and a background check be completed before the individual begins their ministry or employment. If this is not possible, both of these things must be completed within thirty (30) days of hire or start date. In the interim, anyone lacking training or a completed background check must be supervised at all times by a fully trained and background checked worker.

Diocesan Contact Information

Safe Church Ministry: Questions and Program Assistance

The Rev. Cecilia B. Smith
P. O. Box 2247
Austin, TX 78768
1-800-947-0580 or 1-512-478-0580
csmith@epicenter.org
secure fax: 866-241-7050

Marty Brickley
P. O. Box 2247
Austin, TX 78768
1-800-947-0580 or 1-512-478-0580
mbrickley@epicenter.org

Report of Inappropriate Behavior or Policy Violations:

To the head of your church, school or diocesan entity/program **and/or**
The Rev. Cecilia B. Smith – use contact information listed above **OR**

The Rev. Canon Ann Normand, 1225 Texas Ave. Houston, TX 77002
1-800-318-4452 or 1-713-520-6444 anormand@epicenter.org



ADMINISTRATOR'S DOCUMENT PACKET

Master Copies of:

- **Employee/Volunteer Interview Form (Page 1)**
- **Reference Calls Record Form (Page 2)**
- **Background Check Release Form and Inquiry Release (Pages 3 & 4)**
- ***Safeguarding God's Children* Training Information (Page 5)**
- **Registration form for Training (Page 6)**
- **Check List for Personnel Files (Page 7)**
- **Personnel Packets**
 1. **Volunteer Personnel Application Packet**
 2. **Paid Personnel Application Packet**
- ***Handbook for Those Who Work with Children and Youth***

Employee/Volunteer Interview form

If you wish to expand these questions, you must submit them in writing to the Diocesan office for approval by the chancellor so that we are assured of being in compliance with employment laws.

Name of Employee or Volunteer Applicant

Date _____ Time _____ Location _____

Why do you wish to be involved in children's or youth ministry?

Do you have any questions regarding the *Safeguarding God's Children* guidelines?

Is there anything else you would like me to know?

Interviewed by: _____

Reference Calls Record Form

Name of applicant _____

Name of reference being called: _____

“This is (your name) calling from (church, school, diocesan entity). I am making a reference call regarding (Name of applicant) who is applying to work as a (name position for which they are applying, paid or volunteer) for us at (name of church, school or entity). He/She has listed you as a reference on his/her application and I have four questions I would like to ask you:
(Optional: If you get a voicemail, you may go ahead and use this same message and ask the 4 questions. Leave your name again, with your phone number. Experience has shown that this request for information is usually promptly answered.)

1. Did this person follow rules at work or in a volunteer position?

2. Does this person hold any other jobs or do any other volunteer work with children or youth?

3. What, if any, complaints did you ever have about this person’s interaction with children or youth?

4. Have you ever observed anything that would indicate to you that this individual should not work around children or youth?

Other relevant comments or information received from call:

Thank you very much for your time and attention.

Interviewer’s name: _____ Date _____

ATTN: Head of Congregations, Schools and Diocesan Institutions:

**DIOCESE OF TEXAS
BACKGROUND CHECKS POLICY**

Background checks are required for the following:

- 1. all paid employees (full- and part-time), including day school employees**
- 2. all nursery workers (paid or volunteer)**
- 3. volunteers who regularly supervise youth activities**
- 4. Teachers in Sunday or weekday/night programs, including leaders and directors.**
- 5. any volunteer who supervises an overnight youth event**
- 6. camp counselors**
- 7. in addition to the background check persons having financial responsibility, such as posting to ledgers, writing or signing checks must also have a credit check. (Requires Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) Disclosure and Release Form)**
- 8. in addition to the background check persons transporting children must have a driving records check.**
- 9. new background checks are required every five years; do not discard old checks.**

All accumulated documentation must be kept indefinitely.

Background checks, credit check and driving records check are to be filed in the individual's personnel records of the church, school or institution. The Diocese only keeps background check information on clergy. Churches, schools and institutions are responsible for keeping the aforementioned documentation for employees and volunteers in the individual's personnel file.

You may choose to conduct the background check. We have set up a link on the Diocesan web page in the Safe Church Ministry link to *Intellicorp* or *Choice Point* at special rates for the diocese. You will need to set up an account with them for their services.

If you wish the diocese to assist in the initiation of a background check, please have the person to be checked sign the release form and send it to Background Check, Diocese of Texas, 1225 Texas Avenue, Houston, TX 77002. She will initiate the background check, and the report and billing will be sent directly to you.

BACKGROUND INQUIRY RELEASE FORM

In relation to my serving in The Episcopal Diocese of Texas, I understand and authorize the access of public information from various federal, state and other agencies that maintain records containing public information.

I also understand that this information may be accessed during my service and up to thirty (30) days after separation from this diocese. I hereby consent to you obtaining various public record information and other information from Diocesan/Church employers or agencies, by *InfoQuest* and/or any other party or agency in accordance with the Fair Credit Reporting Act and any and all state and federal laws. I also understand that the requested information below is to be used for proper identification only and not for discriminatory purposes.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION. PLEASE PRINT!

Paid or Volunteer Position Sought _____

Church/School Name _____ City _____
(Place of Employment/Volunteering)

Your **Full** Name _____

Social Security Number _____ Date of Birth _____ Gender ___ M ___ F

Driver's License Number _____ State _____

Current Home Address _____

City/State/Zip Code _____ County _____

List previous addresses for last ten (10) years: (use additional pages if necessary)

1) Previous Home Address _____

City/State/Zip Code _____ County _____

2) Previous Home Address _____

City/State/Zip Code _____ County _____

3) Previous Home Address _____

City/State/Zip Code _____ County _____

Transports Children
for a Church/School Yes No

Has Financial Responsibility
for a Church/School Yes No

COMPLETE THIS FORM AND RETURN IT TO YOUR RECTOR OR HEAD OF SCHOOL OR INSTITUTION. THANK YOU

Training Information

Safeguarding God's Children trainings are held throughout the Diocese year around. If you do not have a local certified trainer at your church, school or diocesan entity, check the diocesan website (www.epicenter.org) *Safe Church Ministry* pages for a calendar of training locations and dates. If you would like to send someone from your church, school or diocesan entity to be trained as a trainer, contact the Safe Church Ministry Office (safechurch@epicenter.org).

Your applicants may register for a training by clicking Registration Form on the *Safeguarding God's Children* page. The form may be filled out online and sent to the Safe church Ministry Office by clicking "submit." If an individual does not have access to the internet, you may give them a copy of the registration form on the next page and have them mail or fax it to the address/fax at the bottom of the form.

If you have difficulty finding a training the applicant can attend within the 30 days of their application, call the Safe Church Ministry Office for assistance.

Once the applicant has taken the training, the safe church Ministry Office will process the documentation submitted by the trainer. When the training documents have been processed, your church/school/diocesan entity will receive an email copy of the individual's training certificate. Make a copy of that certificate to give to the individual and place a copy in their personnel file. The training will be recorded in the diocesan data base from which we are able to tell you when someone was trained and from which we are able to send duplicate copies of a training certificate if ever needed.

Recertification Training

Safeguarding training is valid for five (5) years. At the end of that time, if an individual continues her/his work with children or youth or continues in their paid position, they must take the training again. They may repeat the three hour course or, if your church, school or diocesan entity is enrolled in the online training, they may be recertified by completing that course. New certificates, issued for the next five (5) years, will be issued. At the same time, a new background check must be run.



Safeguarding God's Children Registration

Name _____ M()F()

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone __ (____) _____ Office Phone __ (____) _____

Email _____

Church/School/Institution _____

(Episcopal entity requiring you to take this training)

City of above _____ State _____ Zip _____

Position at church/school/institution _____

(Volunteer, staff, etc.)

Date of Training _____

Location of Training _____

Due to the importance of this training and the role the videos play, persons arriving later than 15 minutes after the start time of the training or who arrive after the video has begun will be required to reschedule their training. You must be present for the entire training in order to be certified. We thank you for your understanding.

Please remember to print clearly and fax or mail the form to:

The Rev. Cecilia Smith

P. O. Box 2247

Austin, TX 78768

safechurch@epicenter.org

Fax 866-898-8976

Registration deadline is 5 days before the event.

We must adhere to the deadline to facilitate our trainers' preparation for the training.



VOLUNTEER PERSONNEL APPLICATION PACKET

Episcopal Diocese of Texas
Safeguarding God's Children

Volunteer Personnel: Application Form

Today's Date _____

Please complete all of the questions accurately and fully.

Position Applied for: _____

Name: _____

Street address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

How long at current address: _____

Driver License: State _____ Number _____

Phone: Home (_____) _____ Work (_____) _____

Best Time to Contact You: _____ e-mail address: _____

Please list all counties and states where you have lived in the past ten years:

With what ministry or ministries will you be involved? _____

What interests you about this ministry or ministries? _____

What has prepared you for this ministry or ministries? _____

Have you ever been convicted of or pleaded guilty to or no contest to a crime including driving violations?

If yes to above, please explain: _____

Have you ever been accused of physically, sexually or emotionally abusing a child or an adult?

If yes to above, please explain: _____

Please list volunteer or employment experience:

Organization or Business	Duties/Responsibilities	Dates	Contact	Phone

Please list three references, including one (1) relative whom we may contact.

Name of Reference	Address (city, state, zip)	Daytime Phone	How long have you known this person	Relationship to you

Signature

Date

Volunteer Personnel: Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children and Youth

Read and initial each item to signify your agreement to comply with the statement.

- I agree to do my best to prevent abuse and neglect among children and youth involved in church activities and services.
- I agree not to physically, sexually or emotionally abuse or neglect a child or youth.
- I agree to comply with the policies for *General Conduct with Children and Youth* defined in ***The Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse***.
- I agree to comply with “The Guidelines for Appropriate Affection with Children and Youth” in ***The Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse***.
- In the event that I observe any inappropriate behaviors or possible policy violations with children or youth, I agree to immediately report my observations as outlined in this policy.
- I acknowledge my obligation and responsibility to protect children and youth and agree to immediately report known or suspected abuse of children or youth to appropriate church leaders and state authorities in accordance with ***The Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse***.
- I understand that the church will not tolerate abuse of children and youth and I agree to comply in spirit and in action with its policies.

Signature: _____

Print name: _____

Volunteer Personnel: Acknowledgement and Release

To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this application is complete and accurate. I understand that providing false information is grounds for denial of a volunteer position or for my discharge if I have already been chosen.

I acknowledge that I have received and reviewed a copy of ***The Information Handbook for Those Who Work with Children or Youth***. I authorize any person or organization, whether or not identified in this application, to provide any information concerning my previous employment or volunteer activities, criminal conviction record, sexual offender registry, credit history if I handle money in my volunteer position, driving record if I transport children in my volunteer position, or other qualifications for my volunteering. I also authorize the Episcopal Diocese of Texas and *(name of congregation, school or diocesan entity)*

to request and receive such information.

If chosen, I agree to be bound by the Diocese of Texas policies and procedures, including but not limited to, ***The Diocesan Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse*** and its "Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children and Youth" and such other policies as may be required by *(name of congregation, school or diocesan entity)*

I also understand that my volunteering may be terminated, or any offer or acceptance of volunteering withdrawn, at any time, with or without cause, and with or without prior notice, at the discretion of *(name of church, school or diocesan entity)*

the Episcopal Diocese of Texas, or myself.

Nothing contained in this application or in any pre-volunteering communication is intended to or does create a contract between myself and The Episcopal Diocese of Texas or *(name of church, school or diocesan entity)*

for either volunteering or any other benefit.

I have read and understand the above provisions.

Signature

Date

Print name: _____

BACKGROUND INQUIRY RELEASE FORM

In relation to my serving in The Episcopal Diocese of Texas, I understand and authorize the access of public information from various federal, state and other agencies that maintain records containing public information.

I also understand that this information may be accessed during my service and up to thirty (30) days after separation from this diocese. I hereby consent to you obtaining various public record information and other information from Diocesan/Church employers or agencies, by *InfoQuest* and/or any other party or agency in accordance with the Fair Credit Reporting Act and any and all state and federal laws. I also understand that the requested information below is to be used for proper identification only and not for discriminatory purposes.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION. PLEASE PRINT!

Paid or Volunteer Position Sought _____

Church/School Name _____ City _____
(Place of Employment/Volunteering)

Your **Full** Name _____

Social Security Number _____ Date of Birth _____ Gender ___ M ___ F

Driver's License Number _____ State _____

Current Home Address _____

City/State/Zip Code _____ County _____

List previous addresses for last ten (10) years: (use additional pages if necessary)

1) Previous Home Address _____

City/State/Zip Code _____ County _____

2) Previous Home Address _____

City/State/Zip Code _____ County _____

3) Previous Home Address _____

City/State/Zip Code _____ County _____

Transports Children
for a Church/School Yes No

Has Financial Responsibility
for a Church/School Yes No

COMPLETE THIS FORM AND RETURN IT TO YOUR RECTOR OR HEAD OF SCHOOL OR INSTITUTION. THANK YOU



PAID PERSONNEL APPLICATION PACKET

**EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF TEXAS
*SAFEGUARDING GOD'S CHILDREN***

Paid Personnel: Application Form

Today's Date _____

Please complete all of the questions accurately and fully. Attach additional sheets if needed.

Position Applying for: _____

Name: _____

Street address: _____

City: _____ State _____ Zip: _____

How long at current address: _____

Driver License: State _____ Number _____

Phone: Home (_____) _____ Work (_____) _____

Best Time to Contact You: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Are you legally eligible to work in this country? _____ Yes _____ No

Note: If you are chosen for a paid position, you will be required to show documents verifying your employment eligibility and identity to complete the INS Form I-9 as required by the Immigration Reform and Control Act.

Please list all counties and states where you have lived in the past ten years: (use additional pages if necessary)

What interests you about the position for which you are applying?

What has prepared you for the position for which you are currently applying?

Employment history- Please complete for your current or most recent employer.

Date of Employment	Company name & address, city, state and zip	Immediate supervisor name and phone number	Position held	Reason for leaving
Started ____/____/____ Ended ____/____/____				

May we contact your supervisor? ____ Yes ____ No

If not, when may we contact him or her? _____

Please complete for your former employers for the past ten years. (cont'd on next page – use an additional page if necessary)

Dates of employment (latest to earliest)	Company name address, city, state & zip	Immediate supervisor, name & phone number	Position held	Reason for leaving position
Started ____/____/____ Ended ____/____/____				
Dates of	Company name,	Immediate	Position held	Reason for

employment (latest to earliest)	address, city, state & zip	supervisor, name & phone number		leaving position
Started ___/___/___ Ended ___/___/___				
Started ___/___/___ Ended ___/___/___				

Volunteer experience

Organization	Duties	Dates	Contact person	Phone

Educational history

Name of School	Address (Mailing Address)	Year graduated	Name of program; degree or certificate earned
High School			
College			

Graduate			
Other			

Please list three references, including one (1) relative whom we may contact.

Name of Reference	Address (city, state, zip)	Daytime Phone	How long have you known this person	Relationship to you

Have you ever been convicted of or pleaded guilty to or no contest to a crime including driving violations?

If yes to above, please explain: _____

Have you ever been accused of physically, sexually or emotionally abusing a child or an adult?

If yes to above, please explain: _____

Signature _____ **Date** _____

Paid Personnel: Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children and Youth

Read and initial each item to signify your agreement to comply with the statement.

- I agree to do my best to prevent abuse and neglect among children and youth involved in church activities and services.
- I agree not to physically, sexually or emotionally abuse or neglect a child or youth.
- I agree to comply with the policies for “General Conduct for The Protection of Children and Youth” defined in ***The Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse.***
- I agree to comply with “The Guidelines for Appropriate Affection with Children and Youth” as defined in ***The Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse.***
- In the event that I observe any inappropriate behaviors or possible policy violations with children or youth, I agree to immediately report my observations as outlined in this policy.
- I acknowledge my obligation and responsibility to protect children and youth and agree to immediately report known or suspected abuse of children or youth to appropriate church leaders and state authorities in accordance with ***The Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse.***
- I understand that the church will not tolerate abuse of children and youth and I agree to comply in spirit and in action with its policies.

Signature: _____

Print name: _____

Paid Personnel: Acknowledgement and Release

To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this application is complete and accurate. I understand that providing false information is grounds for denial of employment or for discharge if I have already been chosen.

I acknowledge that I have received and reviewed a copy of ***The Information Handbook for Those Who Work with Children or Youth***.

I authorize any person or organization, whether or not identified in this application, to provide any information concerning my previous employment, education, credit history, driving record, criminal conviction record, sexual offender registry, volunteer activities, or other qualifications for my employment. I also authorize the Episcopal Diocese of Texas and *(name of congregation, school or diocesan entity)*

to request and receive such information.

If hired, I agree to be bound by the Diocese of Texas policies and procedures, including but not limited to, ***The Diocesan Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse*** and its "Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children and Youth" and such other policies as may be required by *(name of congregation, school or diocesan entity)*

I also understand that my employment may be terminated, or any offer or acceptance of employment withdrawn, at any time, with or without cause, and with or without prior notice, at the discretion of *(name of church, school or diocesan entity)*

the Episcopal Diocese of Texas, or myself.

Nothing contained in this application or in any pre-employment communication is intended to or does create a contract between myself and The Episcopal Diocese of Texas or *(name of church, school or diocesan entity)*

for either employment or any other benefit.

I have read and understand the above provisions.

Signature

Date

Print name: _____



The Episcopal Diocese of Texas

**Handbook for Those Who Work
with Children and Youth**

2009 Update

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Why We Have These Policies

Through baptism we share a common life of faith, a life of service and servanthood, a life rooted in love and faithfulness. We promise at every baptism to strive for justice and peace among all people and to respect the dignity of every human being.

These promises call us to assure that our churches are safe places for all God's children. They commit us to our highest and best efforts in our common life, including the care and safety of our children and youth. This policy is a response to OUR baptismal promises.

As part of your application you will be asked to agree to these policies and procedures.

General Definitions

Church Personnel

For the purposes of this policy, the following are included in the definition of Church Personnel when they are functioning in their respective roles for the church:

1. All clergy whether stipendiary, non-stipendiary, canonically resident in this Diocese, licensed in this Diocese, or otherwise who are engaged in ministry or service to the church.
2. All paid personnel, whether employed in areas of ministry or other kinds of services by the Diocese, its congregations, schools or other agencies.
3. Those who contract their services to the Diocese, its congregations, schools or other agencies.
4. Volunteers in activities for children and youth, including any person who enters into or offers himself 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.

For the purpose of these policies, "Head of congregation" is defined as the rector, vicar, lay vicar, senior warden (if no clergyperson is on staff). Heads of school or executive directors of diocesan programs are also administrators of this program.

Types of Abuse

1. **Physical abuse** is non-accidental injury, which is intentionally inflicted upon a child or youth.
2. **Sexual abuse** is any contact or activity of a sexual nature that occurs between a child or youth and an adult. This includes any activity which is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of the adult, child or youth.

3. **Emotional abuse** is mental or emotional injury to a child or youth that results in an observable and material impairment in the child's or youth's growth, development or psychological functioning.

4. **Neglect** is the failure to provide for a child's or youth's basic needs or the failure to protect a child or youth from harm.

Code of Conduct

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 for children and youth in sincere and genuine relationships.

Relationships in ministry should always be experienced as caring and without intention to do harm or allow harm to occur. This “**Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children and Youth**” has been adopted by the Episcopal Diocese of Texas to help the church create safe environments for children and youth and for those who minister to them. All Church Personnel are asked to carefully consider each statement in the “**Code of Conduct for Protection of Children and Youth**” stated in accord with *The Diocesan Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse* before agreeing to adhere to the statements and continue in service to the church. Persons who cannot agree to adhere to the *Code of Conduct* are not allowed to serve in ministry to children and youth.

The Code of Conduct for Protection of Children and Youth

- Church Personnel agree to do their best to prevent abuse and neglect among children and youth involved in church activities and services.
- Church Personnel agree not to physically, sexually or emotionally abuse or neglect a child or youth.
- Church Personnel agree to comply with the Diocesan Safe Church policies as defined in *The Diocesan Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse*.
- Church Personnel agree to comply with *The Guidelines for Appropriate Affection with Children and Youth*.
- Church Personnel acknowledge their obligation and responsibility to protect children and youth and agree to report known or suspected abuse of children or youth to appropriate church leaders and state authorities in accordance with these policies.

- In the event that Church Personnel observe any inappropriate behaviors or possible policy violations with children or youth, Church Personnel agree to immediately report their observations as outlined in this policy.
- Church Personnel understand that the church will not tolerate abuse of children and youth and agree to comply in spirit and in action with this position.

General Guidelines for the Protection of Children and Youth

The following guidelines are intended to assist Church Personnel in monitoring and supervising behaviors and interactions with children and youth. These guidelines will help identify and stop those behaviors and interactions which may be used by child molesters to “groom” children, youth and their parents, or which may create conditions where abuse can more easily occur. These guidelines are also used to make decisions about interactions with children and youth in church sponsored and affiliated programs. They are not designed or intended to address interactions within families.

1. All Church Personnel who work with children and youth must agree to comply with the Diocese of Texas *Guidelines for Appropriate Affection with Children and Youth*.
2. 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 six months.
3. Programs for infants and children under six (6) years old will have procedures to ensure that children are released only to their parents or legal guardians or those designated by them.
4. Church Personnel are prohibited from the use, possession, distribution, or being under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or the misuse of legal drugs or prescription medications while participating in or assisting with programs or activities specifically for children and youth.
5. Parents or guardians must complete written permission forms before Church Personnel transport children and youth for a church sponsored activity or for any purpose.
6. Church Personnel will respond to children and youth with respect, consideration and equal treatment, regardless of sex, race, religion, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, culture or socioeconomic status. Church Personnel will portray a positive role model for children and youth by maintaining an attitude of respect, patience, and maturity. They will avoid even the appearance of favoritism.

7. One-to-one counseling with children and youth will be done in an open or public or other place where private conversations are possible but occur in full view of others.

8. Church Personnel are prohibited from dating or becoming romantically involved with a child or youth.

9. Church Personnel are prohibited from having sexual contact with a child or youth.

10. Church Personnel are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, videos, computer files, e-mails, films, clothing, etc.) on church property or in the presence of children and youth except as expressly permitted as part of an educational program that is preauthorized by the rector or canonical equivalent.

11. Church Personnel are prohibited from using the Internet to view or download any sexually oriented materials on church property or in the presence of children and youth.

12. Church Personnel are prohibited from discussing their own sexual activities, including dreams and fantasies, or discussing their use of sexually oriented or explicit materials such as pornography, videos or materials on or from the Internet, with children or youth.

13. Church personnel are prohibited from sleeping in the same beds, sleeping bags or tents with other children or youth unless the adult is an immediate family member of one of the children or youth in the bed, sleeping bag or tent. An adult may sleep in the same hotel room with no fewer than three (3) other children, providing adult and all children are of the same sex. The adult must sleep alone in a bed or on a cot or rollaway bed. The adult must never be alone with a child. The adult will use the bathroom facilities alone, dressing/undressing in the bathroom with the door closed and with no children present.

Exception to the above is given if any of the children are related to the adult, in which case, the adult may sleep in the same bed with a child who is an immediate family member. It is acceptable to have multiple adults sleep in one open space such as a parish hall or camp lodge with children or youth. A best practice rule is no situation in which one adult is alone with one child unless they are immediate family members.

14. Church Personnel are prohibited from dressing, undressing, bathing, or showering in the presence of children or youth.

15. Church Personnel are prohibited from using physical punishment in any way for behavior management of children and youth. No form of physical discipline is acceptable. This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force. Physical force may only be used to stop a behavior that may cause immediate harm to the individual or to a child, youth or others.

16. Church Personnel are prohibited from using harsh language, profanity, degrading punishment, or any mechanical restraint for behavior management.

17. Church Personnel are prohibited from participating in or allowing others to conduct any hazing activities or behaviors which could be construed as hazing.

Guidelines for Appropriate Affection with Children and Youth

The Diocese of Texas is committed to creating and promoting a positive, nurturing environment for our children and youth ministries that protect our children and youth from abuse and our Church Personnel from misunderstandings. Stating which behaviors are appropriate and which are inappropriate allows Church Personnel to comfortably show positive affection in ministry, and yet identify individuals who are not maintaining safe boundaries with children and youth. The guidelines are based, in large part, on avoiding behaviors known to be used by child molesters to “groom” children, youth, and their parents for future abuse.

The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by all Church Personnel working around or with children and youth.

1. Love and affection are part of church life and ministry. There are many ways to demonstrate affection while maintaining positive and safe boundaries with children and youth. Some positive and appropriate forms of affection are listed below:

- Brief hugs.
- Pats on the shoulder or back.
- Handshakes.
- “High-fives” and hand slapping.
- Verbal praise.
- Touching hands, faces, shoulders and arms of children or youth.
- Arms around shoulders.
- Holding hands while walking with small children.
- Sitting beside small children.
- Kneeling or bending down for hugs with small children.
- Holding hands during prayer.
- Pats on the head when culturally appropriate. (For example, this gesture should typically be avoided in some Asian communities).

2. The following forms of affection are considered **inappropriate** with children and youth in ministry settings because many of them are the behaviors that child molesters use to “groom” children or youth for later molestation or can be, in and of themselves, sexual abuse.

- Inappropriate or lengthy embraces.
- Kisses on the mouth
- Holding children over three years old on the lap.
- Touching bottoms, chests or genital areas other than for appropriate diapering or toileting of infants and toddlers.

- Showing affection in isolated areas such as bedrooms, closets, staff only areas or other private rooms.
- Occupying a bed with a child or youth.
- Touching knees or legs of children or youth.
- Wrestling with children or youth.
- Tickling children or youth.
- Piggyback rides.
- Any type of massage given by a child or youth to an adult.
- Any type of massage given by an adult to a child or youth.
- Any form of unwanted affection.
- Comments or compliments (spoken, written, or electronic) that relate to physique or body development.
- Snapping bras or giving “wedgies” or similar touch of underwear whether or not it is covered by other clothing.
- Giving gifts or money to individual children or youth.
- Private meals with individual children or youth.

Monitoring and Supervision of Programs

Supervisory personnel and others should monitor and supervise the behavior of adults, youth and other children with children and youth so that inappropriate behaviors and interactions can be detected and stopped. The behaviors and interactions of persons with children and youth that need to be monitored and supervised are covered below and in the previous section, *Guidelines for Appropriate Affection with Children and Youth*.

1. Every program for children and youth must meet established ratios for adults and children. Compliance with the established ratio is required at all times, including activities that occur off church premises.
2. Church Personnel are prohibited from being alone with a child or youth or multiple children or youth where other adults cannot easily observe them.
3. Church Personnel aged 21 or older must directly supervise Church Personnel younger than 21 and be physically present during all activities.
4. No person will be permitted to supervise an immediate family member unless another non-related adult is present. An immediate family member is defined as the spouse, parent, child, sibling, grandparent, partner or co-habitant. This also applies to in-law and step family relationships. Related personnel may minister together as long as an unrelated adult is present.
5. An up-to-date list of approved congregation-sponsored programs for children and youth will be maintained in the church office or other place where church records are kept.

6. Church Personnel are not permitted to develop new activities for children and youth without approval from the rector or canonical equivalent. Requests to develop new activities should be submitted in writing to the rector or head of school or institution who will consider whether the plan for a new activity includes adequate adult supervision.
7. Each program will follow age-appropriate procedures to ensure the safety of children and youth using restrooms and showers or baths.
8. When supervising or assisting private activities such as dressing, showering or diapering infants or children, Church Personnel will remain in an area observable by other adults or work in pairs.
9. At least two unrelated Church Personnel must supervise activities. When both boys and girls are participating in overnight activities or activities away from the church or school, male and female chaperones must be present.
10. When transporting children in vehicles, two unrelated adults must be in each vehicle unless the group is organized into a caravan, during which all vehicles are in sight of another vehicle in the caravan. It is suggested that cell phones be available in each car and a list of names and contact numbers be provided to each driver
11. Classrooms or other areas used by children or youth should have windows or a window in the door. If there are no windows or a window in the door, the door must remain open. Doors of occupied classrooms must be unlocked at all times during activities. Unused rooms should be locked.

Procedures for Restroom Use, Showers or Baths for Children or Youth Programs and Activities

1. No adult may shower, bathe or use the restroom facilities in the presence of children or youth. Hand washing is required of all persons after any use of restroom facilities.
2. Diapering should be done in diapering stations in close proximity to other care providers. It is not appropriate for diapering to occur behind closed doors or in isolated places.
3. An adult caregiver must accompany all children age 2 through kindergarten to the restroom. If facilities are removed from the classroom, the caregiver must check the bathroom to see if other adults are present before allowing the child to go in. If there is no stall in the restroom, the caregiver stands outside the door while the child uses the bathroom. If there are stalls, the child goes in alone. The

caregiver will assist the child only if necessary, in which case the stall door and the outer door shall remain ajar. The caregiver should not go into the restroom with the child and close the door, or into the stall and close the door.

4. If the restroom is in the classroom with only one toilet, the child should go alone into the restroom. If the restrooms are removed from the classroom, the caregiver must accompany children age 2 through kindergarten, following the procedures outlined above.

5. In a classroom with attached restrooms with only one toilet, the first through fifth grade child will go alone. If the restrooms are located away from the room, another child of the same sex will accompany the child to the restroom. Children in this age group may not go to the restroom alone. In no instance should a door be completely closed if adult assistance is needed.

6. Youth in sixth through twelfth grades are encouraged to use the buddy system if restrooms are located some distance away from the activity.

7. When there are special needs or extenuating circumstances, a specific policy may be formulated, approved by the rector and the parent(s) of the child, and implemented with appropriate monitoring and supervision. If assistance is needed in formulating such a policy, please contact the Safe Church office.

Responding to Problems

Reporting of Inappropriate Behavior or Policy Violations with Children or Youth

When Church Personnel observe any inappropriate behaviors, behaviors that are inconsistent with the *Guidelines for Appropriate Affection with Children and Youth*, or which may violate any provision of ***The Diocesan Policies for Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse***, they must immediately report their observations as instructed below.

Examples of inappropriate behaviors or policy violations would include:

- seeking private time with children or youth
- taking children or youth on overnight trips without other adults
- swearing or making suggestive comments to children or youth
- or selecting staff or volunteers without the required screening and ***Safeguarding God's Children*** training.

Such inappropriate behaviors or possible policy violations that relate to interactions with children or youth should be reported immediately in one of the following ways:

1. A telephone call or meeting with the head of congregation, head of school or executive director of the diocesan institution. Notification may also be made to the Canon to the Ordinary in the Bishop's office.

2. A telephone call or meeting with the Canon to the Ordinary in the Bishop's office if the complaint is against the head of congregation, head of school or executive director of the diocesan institution.

3. A *Notice of Concern* signed or unsigned, sent to the Bishop. (See end page for *Notice of Concern* form).

- Any person receiving a report of inappropriate behavior or possible violation of these policies shall immediately inform the Bishop's office.
- All reports of inappropriate behavior or policy violations with children or youth will be taken seriously.

Reports may be sent to either of the following:

The Rev. Cecilia B. Smith
Safe Church Office
P. O. Box 2247
Austin, Texas 78768
csmith@epicenter.org
Secure fax: 866-241-7050
Phone: 512-478-0580
800-947-0580

The Rev. Canon Ann Normand
1225 Texas Ave.
Houston, Texas 77002
anormand@epicenter.org
713-520-6444
800-318-4452
Confidential fax: 713-521-2218

Reporting of Suspected Abuse of Children or Youth

All Church Personnel are required by this policy and by the laws of the State of Texas to report known or suspected abuse of children or youth to the police or to Child Protective Services. A copy of this statute is found in the **Safe Church Ministry Policies: Diocesan Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse**.

Reports to Child Protective Services (CPS) may be made in either of the following ways:

1. Call the toll-free 24 hour, 7 days a week, nationwide abuse Hotline: 1-800-252-5400
 2. Report through CPS secure web site (you will receive a response within 24 hours: www.txabusehotline)
 3. E-mail reports are not accepted.
- Failure to report suspected abuse of children or youth is a crime. Reports may be made confidentially or anonymously. Every state provides immunity from civil liability for persons required to report suspected abuse in good faith and without malice. Simply stated, "in good faith" means that the person submitting the report believes what he or she is reporting to be true.
 - Abuse includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse or neglect.

- In addition to reporting to the state authorities, Church Personnel are required to report any suspected or known abuse of children or youth that may have been perpetrated by Church Personnel directly to the head of congregation or school, who will immediately report it to the Bishop, so that immediate and proper steps may be taken.
- Reports of suspected or known abuse that involve Church Personnel must also be reported to the Diocese of Texas in one of the following ways:
 1. A telephone call or meeting with the head of congregation, head of school or executive director of the diocesan institution. Notification may also be made to the Canon to the Ordinary in the Bishop's office or to the Safe Church Minister in the Safe Church Ministry Office.
 2. A telephone call or meeting with the Canon to the Ordinary in the Bishop's office or with the Safe church Minister if the complaint is against the head of congregation, head of school or executive director of the diocesan institution.
 3. A *Notice of Concern*, signed or unsigned, to the Bishop or Canon to the Ordinary; 1225 Texas Avenue; Houston, TX 77002; 713-520-6444 or 800-318-4452; confidential fax 713-521-2218. OR Safe Church Minister; P. O. Box 2247; Austin, TX 78768; 512-478-0580; 800-947-0580; secure fax: 866-241-7050.

The Diocese of Texas will cooperate fully with any investigation by law enforcement authorities.

Confidential Notice of Concern

Who is the complaint about? _____

Position _____

Date of Notice _____

Congregation/school/ institution:

_____ City _____

Nature of Concern: _____

Inappropriate behavior with a child or youth (please describe the behavior)

Policy violation with a child or youth: ____ Yes ____ No

Reason to believe abuse occurred/is occurring: ____ Yes ____ No

Other _____

Describe the situation:

What happened?

Where did it happen?

Who else was present? _____

Has it ever happened before? _____

Was it reported to the authorities? ___ Yes ___ No

If reported, to whom: _____

What action was taken? _____

Follow-up:

Does anyone else need to be notified? _____

Would you like someone to call you to discuss the situation? ___ Yes ___ No
(If yes, be sure to give contact information below.)

Optional Information:

Name _____ Telephone _____

Address: _____

Signature: _____ Date _____

Once completed, please fax or mail to one of the Bishop's Office contacts below:

Canon to the Ordinary

1225 Texas Avenue.

Houston, TX 77002

1-713-520-6444 or 1-800-318-4452

Confidential fax 1-713-521-2218 (Bp's office)

Safe Church Minister

P. O. Box 2247

Austin, Texas 78768

1-800-947-0580 or 1-512-478-0580

Secure fax: 1-866-241-7050