

OVERVIEW OF SAFEGUARDING SCREENING AND TRAINING

GENERAL INFORMATION

- The Safeguarding Record Systems (SRS) of the diocese must be used to obtain, track, and retain all required documentation for screening and training, except as provided in the policies.
- Screening and training of lay persons are managed by the Safeguarding Records Administrator (SRA) of the organization in which they serve.
- Members of the clergy are screened by a separate process outside of SRS and managed by the Bishop's office in Houston. Clergy training is managed by the Safeguarding Office in Austin.
- The diocese no longer "certifies" people separately in Safeguarding God's Children or Safeguarding God's People. When someone has met the screening and training requirements set out in the policies, such person is "qualified" in Safeguarding.

WHO NEEDS SCREENING AND TRAINING

- Volunteers and employees are screened and trained according to the position or positions in which they serve. See *Safeguarding Requirements by Position*.
- Anyone current in screening and training for a position in one organization of the diocese is generally qualified to serve in the same position in another organization of the diocese without further screening or training.
- Anyone screened and trained in "Safe Church, Safe Communities" in another Episcopal diocese will be evaluated by the Safeguarding Office to determine what screening and/or additional training will be required.

WHAT IS INVOLVED IN SCREENING?

- Unless an organization has an Independent Screening agreement with the Safeguarding Office, adult screening is performed and tracked through SRS.
- Generally, adult screening initially requires:
 - A personal interview
 - An online application and reference checks
 - A Social Security verification and a nationwide sex offender and criminal history background check in any state where the applicant has resided in the past seven years.
- An initial screening is good for five ((5) years. Thereafter, a background check must be performed every five (5) years in order for screening to remain current. Generally, personal interviews, applications, and reference checks do not need to be repeated.
- Background checks ordered through SRS are paid for by the diocese.
- Persons under the age of 18 have a separate screening process.

WHAT IS INVOLVED IN TRAINING?

- With rare exceptions, training involves at a minimum taking online modules assigned by the Safeguarding Office and accessed online at Praesidium Academy. See *Help Sheet: Safeguarding Training by Position*.
- In addition, a three (3) hour Universal Engagement Training is required for persons who
 - work with or around children,
 - minister to Vulnerable Adults,
 - minister in a Pastoral Relationship,
 - are the Head of Organization,
 - supervise others, OR
 - serve as a warden in a congregation.

Universal Engagement training is live and may be taken either in person or on Zoom. Persons must complete all assigned video courses before taking the Universal Engagement training.

- Training must be renewed every five (5) years, but not all online modules initially assigned will generally be required for renewal. Universal Engagement training, when required, must be taken every five (5) years.
- Screening requirements are tracked separately from training requirements. Thus, a person whose screening is current in SRS does not need rescreening simply because additional training is required to meet Safeguarding qualifications.

SAFEGUARDING THRESHOLDS

- **No person who has admitted to the sexual abuse of a child or youth or who is known to have a criminal conviction or civil record of child abuse, may be employed or permitted to volunteer to work with or around children or youth in the diocese.**
- A lay volunteer must be known by the leadership of the diocese or organization for at least six (6) months before applying for a position that involves working with or around children and youth, ministry with Vulnerable Adults, or Pastoral Relationships. Any exception must be approved by the [Safeguarding Minister](#).
- Before lay employees or volunteers are allowed to work with or around children or youth, minister to Vulnerable Adults, or minister in a Pastoral Relationship, they must have completed the Safeguarding screening requirements. They may continue in their work or ministry only if they complete their training requirements within forty-five (45) days. Any exceptions must be approved by the Safeguarding Office.
- In order to serve as a Qualified Adult under the *Safeguarding God's Children: Policies Protecting Children and Youth (SGC)*, a lay person must be current in all screening and training requirements.
- No member of the clergy (other than a Parent Volunteer under *SGC VII.C.1*) will be allowed to work regularly with or around children or youth until provisionally licensed to work as a member of the clergy in the diocese. For a member of the clergy to continue working with or around children, all screening and training requirements must be completed with 90 days from the start or hire date of the member of the clergy. Persons preparing for ordination are treated as lay persons for purposes of *SGC VI.A.4*.