



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY STANDARDS





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Letter from Bishop Stewart

Dear Upper Midwest Diocese,

So many of our churches in the Diocese are marked by a love for and commitment to our next generation. This is poignantly displayed in our ministry to children and youth. While worship and catechesis are forefront, intentional actions, and processes to protect children and youth are equally important.

Jesus' prioritization and proper care of children is evident in Luke 18:15-17. These Diocesan Standards apply his model of honoring our children and youth to the everyday life of our Diocese.

We developed these Standards via a collaborative effort of ministry leaders from each deanery. Once completed the Standards were approved by the Bishop's Council and reviewed by Brotherhood Legal Assist. These minimum Standards provide local churches the opportunity to craft policies that work for their unique context, while also maintaining clear expectations which all church policies must meet. We will update the Standards regularly as new best practices evolve in the larger realm of child and youth safeguarding.

We must all be committed to complying with these Standards, especially our clergy and ministry leaders. The Standards themselves state that they are not optional but required. Every rector is responsible to work with his staff and vestry or parish council to set up, and regularly review, parish level processes of compliance and accountability. The diocesan office will be supporting the rectors in their responsibilities by providing regular check ins for accountability, compliance, and support.

Thank you for taking these Standards with the utmost seriousness, and for your commitment to love one another, and especially for your love and care for our next generation.

Stewart E. Ruch III
Bishop, Upper Midwest Diocese



Introduction from the Child Protection Task Force

Every church in the Upper Midwest Diocese (UMD) is expected to draft or review their own child protection policy using these standards and with the input of other existing policies - from within or outside our diocese - as reference. The team responsible for developing safeguarding policy at the local level should carefully read through these standards and apply them to their own meeting place and ministry context, addressing the actual needs of ministries “on the ground.” The involvement of staff, clergy, vestry, and volunteers is necessary for this review. That collaboration is valuable not simply for a shared awareness of relevant issues, but for fostering the kind of culture that is engaged and prepared. The safeguarding of the church's children is not a work for one person but for the entire community.

Teams developing policies for the local church must comply with these standards, however, also may decide to go beyond the minimum standards laid out here. For example, the standards state that nursery workers may change diapers, but your church may elect to stipulate that only parents/guardians take on that task.

Definition of Terms

- Must include definitions of abuse, and abuse of a minor. Each state has its own definition of what constitutes child abuse under civil and criminal laws, and each church in the Upper Midwest Diocese should be familiar with the laws and legal definitions in its jurisdiction. In general, the definitions of child abuse and child neglect in all states include the following elements (among others):
 - Physical abuse
 - Physical and/or mental neglect
 - Sexual abuse and/or exploitation

Zero Tolerance Policy for Abuse

[Church Name] does not permit or allow sexual abuse or other forms of abuse to occur in or near its facilities or at any activity sponsored or related to it.

Five Point Safety System

**Note: For volunteers who work directly with children or youth, and ALL employees regardless of position.*



(1) Screening

Must Include:

1. Application
 - a. Contact Information
 - b. Background Information (criminal history, commission or allegation of abuse/sexual misconduct, prior church membership, prior work serving with children/youth, residence history, employment history, education)
 - i. Must include the questions:
 1. Has the applicant ever been convicted of or pleaded guilty or no contest to a criminal offense of any kind?
 2. Has the applicant ever participated in or been accused, convicted, or pleaded guilty or no contest to abuse or any sexual misconduct, or had such a record expunged?
 3. Is the applicant aware of any traits or tendencies that could pose any threat to children, youth, or vulnerable adults?
 - c. References - Personal and Professional
**Note: Must contain at least two references, which must be checked.*
 - d. Verification & signed release
2. 6-month rule: volunteers must attend Sunday services for a minimum of 6 months before being eligible to serve in positions with access to minors.
**Note: In church-planting situations, exceptions to the six-month minimum are allowed at the discretion of the dean, rector and the Safety Coordinator, who must all agree.*
3. Criminal Background Check/National Sex Offender Registry Search
**Note: A minimum of Level 3 check is recommended) <https://ministrysafe.com/the-safety-system/background-check/>*
 - a. Individuals who have committed sexually oriented or sex-related crimes may not serve in any area providing services to minors.
 - b. Background checks must be renewed every 3 years.
4. Interview

**Note: If a ministry's screening process reveals any concerns about an individual posing a threat to others, the individual should not be permitted to work or serve in a position with minors. The person overseeing the screening process should share these concerns with both the rector and the diocesan office.*



(2) Training

Must Include:

1. Reading and signing the Child Protection Policy annually
2. Ministry Safe Abuse Awareness Training (or comparable training)
3. Ministry-specific trainings
4. DCFS/CPS Mandated Reporter Training in compliance with state guidelines (see appendix for state-specific training links)

Encouraged to Include:

1. The Lion and the Lamb: How the Gospel Informs our Responses to Abuse
www.youtube.com/watch?v=mQPk5pA0zuo.
2. Additional and ongoing training offered through the church/deanery/diocese on scenarios, abuse response, etc.

(3) Interactions

1. Supervision:

- a. Minimum requirement: “Rule of Three” volunteers should not be alone with a minor. One adult and two minors, or two minors and one adult as a minimum (family members count as one ‘person’ in the rule of three).

**Note: All churches must have two non-related adults in all children’s ministry rooms.*

**Note: If the minors are under age 5, then two non-related adults must always be present.*

**Note: There may be exceptions in youth ministry for 1:1 meetings. These should take place:*

- *With prior consent from the minor’s parent/guardian*
- *In a public setting, visible to other people, never in a private home or behind a closed door without a window.*
- *May institute limits on 1:1 meetings such as a limited number of meetings and/or a time limit of 30 to 60 minutes.*

- b. No child should ever be left unattended. Minors should never be alone in areas that are not visible or accessible to supervision.
- c. Release of Children
 - i. The check-in and check-out system for children must clearly be stated in your policy.



- d. Adult/Child Ratios, based on state's standards.
 - e. Building Supervision - every room and restroom must be checked after a ministry event by two volunteers/staff members.
 - f. Parental Involvement
 - i. Parents/Guardians will be contacted if a child becomes ill or injured during a ministry event.
 - ii. An open invitation should be extended to parents/guardians to visit at any time with or without prior notification.
 - iii. If parents/guardians want to be involved in a child's class more than twice in a year, they must go through the screening process.
2. Bathroom Policies:
- a. Nursery: Diaper changes must only be done by parents/guardians or by a nursery worker in plain sight of other workers.
 - b. Preschool: Bathroom door must be left open, and child may not be left unattended - a volunteer/staff member should stand at the door facing away from the bathroom.
 - c. Elementary: Rule of three must be followed, verbal assistance as needed may be given.
 - i. For shared/public restroom settings: the volunteer should accompany children to and from the restroom and enter the restroom to ensure it is safe before any child enters it. The adult should wait outside the restroom.
3. Interpersonal Interaction:
- a. Verbal interaction
 - i. Should always be positive and uplifting.
 - ii. Minors should not be spoken to in a way that is or could be construed by any reasonable observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, sexual, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. Adults are expected to refrain from swearing in the presence of minors.
 - b. Physical interaction
 - i. Should always be for the benefit of the minor, in the presence of others, and always be above reproach.
 - ii. A minor's preference to not be touched must be respected.
 - iii. Inappropriate interactions are forbidden. They include: wrestling, kissing, forcing unwanted affection, sitting in laps (except under



- age 5), commenting on children’s bodies, massages, spanking, slapping, or any form of physical discipline.
- c. Electronic Communication
 - i. There must be an electronic communication policy as part of the policy (see for example, Minnesota Deanery Policy & Church of the Resurrection, (IL) policy for ideas for guidelines)
- d. Off-Site Events
 - i. Parental consent is needed for any off-site ministry event.
 - ii. Overnight events require a written safety plan to be sent out to all parents/guardians prior to the event.
- e. Transportation
 - i. Each church in the Upper Midwest Diocese shall include age specific transportation guidelines in their Child Protection Policy.
- f. Photography/Video Opt-Out
 - i. Volunteers may not take photos of children at church or any church sponsored event without permission from the child’s parent/guardian
- g. Substances
 - i. Staff/volunteers are prohibited from using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs, or abusing prescription drugs while in any church facility, while traveling with minors, or while working with or supervising minors. In addition, it is unacceptable to supply any minor with any alcohol, drugs, tobacco products, or smoking materials.

(4) Monitoring

1. Child Safety Coordinator - Every church must determine an individual/team (team is recommended) who maintains and oversees the Child Safety Program. Screening and Training will be monitored at each church by its Safety Coordinator, who will maintain up-to-date records pertaining to these items.
2. All staff/volunteers are expected to watch for policy violations and report them to the Church Safety Coordinator/Team.
3. Annual review of policy by a team.

(5) Responding and Reporting

1. Civil Reporting



- a. If there is reasonable cause to suspect abuse, those suspicions do not need to be investigated or substantiated, a report must be made to the state. When in doubt, report.
 - i. **Illinois:** <https://www2.illinois.gov/dcfs/safekids/reporting/Pages/index.aspx>
 - ii. **Iowa:** <https://dhs.iowa.gov/report-abuse-and-fraud>
 - iii. **Minnesota:** <https://mn.gov/dhs/people-we-serve/children-and-families/services/child-protection/contact-us/>
 - iv. **Missouri:** <https://dss.mo.gov/cd/keeping-kids-safe/can.htm>
 - v. **South Dakota:** <https://dss.sd.gov/childprotection/>
 - vi. **Wisconsin:** <https://def.wisconsin.gov/reportabuse>
 - vii. For assistance in reporting, include the Child help National Child Abuse Hotline - (1-800) 422-4453
2. Church Reporting
 - a. In addition to reporting to the civil authorities, a report should be made to the Church Safety Coordinator.
3. Responding to a Child Victim
 - a. Every policy should include information on how to respond appropriately to a child who has made a disclosure. (See Appendix C for MN Deanery & Church of the Resurrection, IL policies for examples.)
4. Follow-up steps after reporting
 - a. Ensure the safety of the child or youth, report to legal authorities, and report to church authorities. Make sure all the appropriate paperwork is filed.
5. Internal Complaint Policy
 - a. Each church in the Upper Midwest Diocese shall include a written Internal Complaint Policy within its Child Protection Policy.

Guidelines for Junior Volunteers/Youth Helpers

- If your church has minors serving as volunteers in children's ministry, there needs to be specific screening, training, and interacting/monitoring guidelines for them.
- Once a minor volunteer/employee turns 18, he/she must go through the entire adult screening & training process.



External Childcare Workers

- If a church hires external childcare workers, there needs to be guidelines for their screening, training, and monitoring.

Off-Site Childcare at Small Groups

- Church-sponsored small group hosts are required to complete the Ministry Safe Abuse Awareness Training.
- Churches are encouraged to provide best practices to small group hosts (see Appendix B for an example).

NB: Every church is required to submit their policy for a review by Brotherhood Mutual. This is a free service provided to all ACNA churches.

Fill in the short form and attach your safeguarding policy [here](#) for review.



Child Policy Development Checklist

This is a tool to help you implement the Child Protection Policy Standards. As you are going through the checklist, be sure you thoroughly read the relevant sections of the policy standards.

Does your policy have...

General

- Definitions of abuse in line with your state's legal standards
- A zero-tolerance statement

Safety systems for all employees and any child/youth-serving volunteers

- Screening (page 4)
 - Application
 - Six-month rule
 - Criminal background check/National Sex Offender Registry Search
 - Interview
- Training (page 5)
 - Annual reading and signing of CPP
 - Abuse awareness training
 - Ministry-specific trainings
 - State-required DCFS/CPS training
- Interactions (pages 5 - 7)
 - Supervision
 - Bathroom policies
 - Interpersonal interaction
- Monitoring (page 7)
 - Child safety coordinator
 - Staff reports
 - Annual policy review
- Responding and Reporting (pages 7 - 8)



- Civil reporting
- Church reporting
- Responding to a child victim
- Follow-up after reporting
- Internal Complaint Policy
- Additional Pieces (pages 8 - 9)
 - Guidelines for junior volunteers and youth helpers
 - Guidelines for external childcare workers
 - Standards for off-site childcare at small groups

Has your policy been...

- Submitted to Brotherhood Mutual for review



APPENDIX A - MANDATED REPORTING

Mandated Reporter Trainings

1. Illinois online mandated reporter training at <https://mr.defstraining.org/UserAuth/Login!loginPage.action;jsessionid=29591E00609CE845BD0B579A03B1B5BB>
2. Iowa mandated reporter training at <https://boee.iowa.gov/mandatory-child-and-dependent-adult-abuse-reporter-training>
3. Minnesota has online mandated reporter training at <https://mnchildwelfaretraining.com/training/mandated-reporting-training/>
4. Missouri mandated reporter training at <https://www.missourikidsfirst.org/get-help/mandated-reporter-training/>
5. South Dakota online mandated reporter training at <https://apps.sd.gov/SS60ReporterVideoTraining/Introduction.aspx>
6. Wisconsin has an [online mandated reporter training](#) at <https://media.wcwpds.wisc.edu/mandatedreporter/>

Checklist for Making a Mandated Report

1. Alleged Victim(s)
 - a. Name(s) of victim(s):
 - b. Birth date(s) of victim(s) or approximate age:
 - c. Address (or approximate address):
2. Alleged Perpetrator(s)
 - a. Name(s):
 - b. Birth date(s) or age(s) or some approximation so role of DCFS can be determined:
 - c. Relationship to Victim(s):
 - d. Address:
3. Harm to Victim(s)
 - a. Physical Abuse
 - b. Sexual Abuse



- c. Risk of Harm
- d. Neglect
- e. Death

Note: The Hotline worker will be able to put the allegation in the proper sub-category such as Physical Abuse/Cuts, Bruises, and Welts.

4. Description of incident(s)

Be prepared to give a brief description of the incident(s) of abuse/neglect

- a. As much detail as you have about the actual incident
- b. Indication of intention (especially physical abuse)
- c. Description of time and place of incident
- d. Information, if any, about possible witnesses to the abuse/neglect
- e. Evidence of abuse (physical evidence, behavioral indicators, disclosure by victim, etc.)
- f. Evidence of neglect (disclosure by victim, observations, etc)

5. Date and time of when Hotline call is made

- a. Name of hotline worker taking the call
- b. What action, if any, will be taken by DCFS
- c. Intake ID number (provided by hotline worker)

6. Confirmation paperwork

- a. Have you filled out the *Written Confirmation of Suspected Child Abuse/Neglect Report* for mandated reporters and mailed it in to DCFS?



APPENDIX B - IN HOME CHILDCARE

Minnesota Deanery Churches Child Safety Best Practices for In-Home Gatherings

Dear Small Group Hosts,

Thank-you for opening your home to host a small group or event. When groups are not meeting at the church but choosing instead to meet in a home, hosts are responsible for providing a reasonably safe and secure environment for their guests. The care and protection of children in such settings is always the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s). When children are in attendance, experts recommend following these childcare best practices. It would be good to share these guidelines with members of any group in your home so everyone can help keep children safe. Because experts recommend all caregivers be screened and trained in child safety practices, our church offers free background checks and Ministry Safe training for your caregivers as a service available to you.

Experts recommend the following guidelines for in-home childcare:

- It is best to have two adults present for every eight children.
- Children should be cared for in an easily visible area of your home with doors and window shades open to rooms where children are present.
- Before you host children, inspect your home for dangerous and hazardous environments including indoor and outdoor areas where children might play.
- Only parents should do the diapering or toileting of their own children.
- For the safety of the children, and liability to the host, no known sex offenders should attend small groups where children are present.
- Avoid nudity of any kind (e.g. changing clothes) for both children and caregivers at any of your gatherings.
- In an effort to keep all guests and group members informed, experts suggest each group should develop safety rules and exit plans in case of emergency.

If you have questions or would like help in some way, please contact your church's Safety Coordinator.



APPENDIX C - RESOURCES

Brotherhood Mutual:

- [Child Protection in a Ministry Environment - Guidelines for Ministry Workers](#)
- [Supervising Activities Checklist](#)
- [Background Screening Checklist](#)
- [Sample Children/Youth Volunteer Application](#)
- [Worker Renewal Application](#)

ECAP (Evangelical Council for Abuse Prevention)

- [Resource Page](#)
- [Child Safety Coordinator Role](#)

GRACE (Godly Response to Abuse in a Christian Environment)

- [Resource Page](#)

State Mandated Reporter Resources/Guides/Manuals:

- **Illinois:** [Manual for Mandated Reporters](#)
- **Iowa:** [Tools, Trainings & Resources](#)
- **Minnesota:** [Resource Guide for Mandated Reporter of Child Maltreatment Concerns](#)
- **Missouri:** [Guidelines for Mandated Reporters of Child Abuse and Neglect](#)
- **South Dakota:** [Reporting Child Maltreatment in South Dakota: A guide for mandatory and permissive reporters.](#)
- **Wisconsin:** [Mandated Child Abuse and Neglect Reporters | Wisconsin Department of Children and Families](#)

Resources for Parents/Church Leaders:

- [Resources for Identifying, Preventing and Responding to Abuse - Church of the Resurrection, IL](#)

Sample Policies:

- [ACNA Sample Policy](#)
- [MN Deanery Policy](#)
- [Church of the Resurrection, IL Policy](#)