

# ST. MATTHIAS EPISCOPAL CHURCH

## Policies for Ministries with Children or Youth

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## **1. Philosophy**

- 1.1. Ministry with children and youth, like much of the work Jesus Christ has given us to do, is a ministry of relationships. Children, youth and adult supervisors, parents, clergy and other volunteers come into contact with one another to share their lives, worship, have fun and explore how their spiritual beliefs shape their lives.
- 1.2. Jesus Christ calls us to loving relationships that are healthy and helpful to each other, not taking advantage of those who are weaker or putting people in situations that are inappropriate for their age or maturity. All persons involved in ministry with children and youth, whether child, youth or adult, deserve to be treated as Jesus Christ would treat them, with love, respect, kindness and as an end in themselves rather than a means to another's wishes. We are to seek God's purposes for one another and not our own selfish purposes.
- 1.3. All participants in ministry to children and youth (children, youth, young adults, helpers, Sunday School teachers, nursery workers, and adult supervisors) deserve to be in a safe environment; which includes, but is not limited to, an environment that is free from harassment, abuse, and misconduct. These policies are meant to help provide for such an environment.
- 1.4. The document serves as a statement of policies for ministry to children or youth sponsored or promoted by St. Matthias. If these policies are not met the activity must be cancelled.

## **2. Definition of terms**

- 2.1. Church Workers. For the purposes of this policy, the following are included in the definition of Church Workers when they are functioning in their respective roles for the church:
  - 2.1.1. All clergy whether stipendiary, non-stipendiary, or otherwise who are engaged in ministry or service to the church.
  - 2.1.2. All paid employees of St. Matthias or it's agencies.
  - 2.1.3. Volunteers, including any person who enters into or offers him 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. Volunteers include, but is not limited to, members of advisory boards, vestries, Bishop's Committees, boards or directors, Sunday School workers, youth workers, nursery workers, and Christian

education workers

2.1.4. Those who contract their services to St. Matthias or it's agencies.

2.2. Church Workers who Regularly Work With or Around Children or Youth. For the purpose of this policy, the following are included in the definition of Church Workers who Regularly Work With or Around Children or Youth (*and may be referred to hereafter as "regular church worker"*):

2.2.1. All clergy whether stipendiary, non-stipendiary, or otherwise who are engaged in ministry or service to the church.

2.2.2. All persons who regularly (more than five times per year) supervise or assist with supervising children or youth in ministries, programs, or activities.

2.2.3. All persons who regularly (more than five times per year) provide transportation to children or youth.

2.2.4. All employees and those persons 21 years old and older whose living quarters are on the grounds of the church, school, or other related agency.

2.2.5. All persons who supervise children or youth at an overnight activity.

2.2.6. All staff, whether volunteer or paid, at church camps.

2.3. Church Workers who Occasionally Work With or Around Children or Youth. For the purpose of this policy, the following are included in the definition of Church Workers who Occasionally Work With or Around Children or Youth (*and may be referred to hereafter as "occasional church worker"*):

2.3.1. All persons who supervise or assist with supervising children or youth in ministries, programs, or activities no more than five times a year.

2.3.2. All persons who, during a St. Matthias sponsored activity, provide transportation to children or youth no more than five times a year.

2.4. Helpers. For the purpose of this policy, the following are included in the definition of Church Workers who are Helpers: all persons under the age of 21 with direct involvement with children and youth, whether volunteer or paid.

2.5. Age Groups. This policy defines the age groups, grade school level

and appropriate involvement of each.

- 2.5.1. Children: birth up to the entrance of the 6th grade.
- 2.5.2. Youth: entering 6th grade up to 18th Birthday or high school graduation (whichever is later).
- 2.5.3. Young Adults: those who have had their 18th birthday or graduated high school up to their 21st birthday.

2.6. Definitions of abuse.

- 2.6.1. Physical abuse is non-accidental injury, which is intentionally inflicted upon a child or youth.
- 2.6.2. Sexual abuse perpetrated by an adult 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.
- 2.6.3. Sexual abuse perpetrated by another child or youth is any contact or activity of a sexual nature that occurs between a child or youth and another child or youth when there is no consent, when consent is not possible, or when one child or youth has power over the other child or youth. This includes any activity which is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of any of the children or youth.
- 2.6.4. Emotional abuse is mental or emotional injury to a child or youth that results in an observable and material impairment in the child or youth's growth, development or psychological functioning.
- 2.6.5. Neglect is the failure to provide for a child or youth's basic needs or the failure to protect a child or youth from harm.
- 2.6.6. Economic exploitation is the deliberate misplacement, exploitation, or wrongful temporary or permanent use of a child or youth's belongings or money.

**3. Policies Regarding Church Workers who Regularly Work With or Around Children or Youth.**

- 3.1. Church Workers who Regularly Work With or Around Children or Youth must be appropriately screened. Screening must include at least the following:
  - 3.1.1. A standard application completed by the applicant that includes an authorization for the release of information to conduct background checks.

- 3.1.2. Reference checks of persons who know the applicant; preferably who knows how the applicant works with children or youth. A minimum of two references must be from outside the congregation.
- 3.1.3. Criminal records check of all applicants, except Sunday School teachers, in any state where the applicant has resided during the past seven (7) years, and other states, if any, as determined by the church.
- 3.1.4. Sexual offender registry check in any state where the applicant has resided during the past seven (7) years.
- 3.1.5. Driving or Motor Vehicle records check if the person will be regularly transporting children or youth.
- 3.1.6. A face-to-face interview of the applicant by the rector or rector's designee(s).
- 3.2. Church Workers who Regularly Work With or Around Children or Youth must be at least 21 years of age.
- 3.3. A person convicted of child abuse or molestation will not be permitted to be Church Workers who Regularly Work With or Around Children or Youth at St. Matthias..
- 3.4. All Church Workers who Regularly Work With or Around Children or Youth, except employees of St. Matthias, must have been actively involved at St. Matthias for at least 6 months prior to involvement with children or youth.
- 3.5. All Church Workers who Regularly Work With or Around Children or Youth must have written documentation of attendance, within the last four years, of the Diocese of Colorado's *Safeguarding God's Children* workshop or an equivalent prevention of sexual abuse program approved by the Diocese of Colorado's Canon to the Ordinary.
- 3.6. Church workers who are responsible for screening, selection, and supervision of adult church workers in programs for children or youth are required to complete the Diocese of Colorado's *Prevention of Adult Sexual Misconduct* workshop or an equivalent program approved by the Diocese of Colorado's Canon to the Ordinary.
- 3.7. All information gathered about an applicant must be carefully reviewed and evaluated by the rector or the rector's designee(s) to make a determination, in consultation with others as necessary, of whether or not the person is appropriate to work with children or youth.
- 3.8. Church Workers who Regularly Work With or Around Children must have a personnel file that is kept where other church records are kept.

Appropriate care must be taken with these files to assure confidentiality.

- 3.9. Church membership or active involvement at the church does not guarantee involvement with children or youth as a regular church worker. Ministry with children and youth is a call and requires a specific set of gifts, talents, and spiritual maturity. Involvement with children and youth is always at the rector's discretion and therefore, the rector must provide written approval of an individual's eligibility to work with children or youth.

#### **4. Policies Regarding Church Workers who Occasionally Work With or Around Children or Youth.**

- 4.1. Church Workers who Occasionally Work With or Around Children or Youth must be appropriately screened. Screening must include at least a written application, a signed consent to a background check and be approved by the rector or the rector's designee(s). Background checks of Occasional Workers shall include at least the following:
  - 4.1.1. Criminal records check of all applicants, except Sunday School teachers, in any state where the applicant has resided during the past seven (7) years, and other states, if any, as determined by the church.
  - 4.1.2. Sexual offender registry check in any state where the applicant has resided during the past seven (7) years.
  - 4.1.3. Driving or Motor Vehicle records check if the person will be transporting children or youth.
  - 4.1.4. A face-to-face interview of the applicant by the rector or rector's designee(s).
- 4.2. Church Workers who Occasionally Work With or Around Children or Youth must be at least 21 years of age.
- 4.3. A person convicted of child abuse or molestation will not be permitted to be a Church Workers who Occasionally Work With or Around Children or Youth at a St. Matthias activity for children or youth.
- 4.4. Church Workers who Occasionally Work With or Around Children or Youth must have been active members of St. Matthias for at least 6 months prior to involvement with children or youth.
- 4.5. Church membership or active involvement at the church does not guarantee involvement with children or youth as an occasional church worker. Ministry with children and youth is a call and requires a specific set of gifts, talents, and spiritual maturity. Involvement with

children and youth is always at the rector's discretion and therefore, the rector must provide written approval of an individual's eligibility to work with children or youth.

## **5. Policies Regarding Helpers**

- 5.1. Helpers must always be under the supervision and in the physical presence of an adult church worker designated to supervise children or youth activities.
- 5.2. A person convicted of child abuse or molestation will not be permitted to be a helper at a St. Matthias activity for children or youth.
- 5.3. All helpers must have been active members of St. Matthias for at least 6 months prior to involvement with children or youth.
- 5.4. Helpers must be considered participants when calculating appropriate ratios of adults and children or youth.
- 5.5. Church membership or active involvement at the church does not guarantee involvement with children or youth as a helper. Ministry with children and youth is a call and requires a specific set of gifts, talents, and spiritual maturity. Involvement with children and youth is always at the rector's discretion and therefore, the rector must provide written approval of an individual's eligibility to work with children or youth.

## **6. Monitoring and Supervision Policies**

- 6.1. These minimum standards of supervision apply to all St. Matthias sponsored activities and include, but are not limited to, regular worship times, Sunday School, nursery, childcare, youth group, camps, retreats, and babysitting.
- 6.2. An appropriate clergy person or adult layperson with adequate experience and training must be designated by the rector to oversee all regular or occasional church workers and helpers in ministries with children or youth.
- 6.3. To the extent possible, no person will be permitted to supervise regular or occasional church workers who are an immediate family member when working with or around children or youth. For the purpose of this policy, immediate family member is defined as spouse, partner, child, parent, sister, brother, similar in-law relationship, stepchild, stepparent, stepsibling, grandparent, or co-habitant.
- 6.4. In order to assure compliance with parish policies and safety all new and developing St. Matthias activities for children or youth must receive the prior approval of the rector. Requests to develop new

activities should be submitted in writing to the rector. The rector will consider whether the plan for a new activity adheres to these policies and includes adequate supervision.

- 6.5. An up to date list of approved St. Matthias sponsored programs for children or youth will be maintained in the church office or other place where church records are kept.
- 6.6. A minimum of one regular church worker and one additional regular or occasional church worker who are not related to each other must be present at all children or youth activities except regularly scheduled “Sunday School” classes (this exception does not include nursery care).
- 6.7. Regular and occasional church workers who are immediate family members may not be the only adults supervising an activity for children or youth. For the purpose of this policy, immediate family member is defined as spouse, partner, child, parent, sister, brother, similar in-law relationship, stepchild, stepparent, stepsibling, grandparent, or co-habitant.
- 6.8. Sunday School classes must meet one of the following three criteria:
  - 6.8.1. Two-person rule: each Sunday School class must have a minimum of one regular church worker and one additional regular or occasional church worker who are not related.
  - 6.8.2. One-person-plus-supervisor rule: each Sunday School class must have at least one regular or occasional church worker. In addition the rector or the rector’s designee(s) must also designate one regular church worker to supervise, and be available to, classes throughout the scheduled activity. This designated individual must not be responsible for a class and must regularly visit each class during the scheduled activity to assist as necessary and assure no reasonable expectation of privacy for each class.
  - 6.8.3. One-person-plus-observer rule: each Sunday School class must have one regular church worker. In addition the rector or the rector’s designee(s) must also designate one regular or occasional church worker who has taken the Diocesan Safeguarding God’s Children to observe, and be available to, classes through the scheduled activity. This designated individual must not be responsible for a class and must regularly visit each class during the scheduled activity to assist as necessary and assure no reasonable expectation of privacy for each class.
- 6.9. Ministries, programs, and activities for children or youth must provide adequate supervision by having established ratios for adults and



children or youth (depending on expected numbers, age range, and type of activity). Compliance with the established ratio is required at all times, including activities that occur off church premises.

- 6.10. The youngest regular church worker, occasional church worker, or helper must be at least three years older than the oldest participant at a St. Matthias sponsored youth activity.
- 6.11. At no point should helpers be alone in their responsibilities in caring for children and youth. A regular church worker must supervise, and be physically present with, helpers when they are in care of children or youth.
- 6.12. When supervising or assisting private activities such as dressing, showering, or diapering infants or children, church workers will remain in an area observable by other adults or work in pairs.
- 6.13. Each program will develop age-appropriate procedures to ensure the safety of children and youth using restrooms, showers, or baths.
- 6.14. At an overnight activity there must be present at all times a minimum of two adults of the same gender as the participants. (For example: If an overnight activity has both male and female children or youth there must be at least two male and two female adults present)
- 6.15. Males and females must sleep in separated areas and have separate bathroom facilities or schedules for changing, bathing, or showering. Adults and children or youth must have separate facilities or schedules for changing, bathing, or showering.
- 6.16. There may be times outside of those listed above when St. Matthias provides childcare or babysitting. At such times it is required that there be at least one regular church worker present.

## **7. General Policies concerning activities with children and youth**

- 7.1. Every St. Matthias activity for children or youth is an open event. Clergy, parents, church staff members and parishioners are always welcome to observe any event at any time.
- 7.2. At activities sponsored by St. Matthias for children or youth, non-sacramental use of alcohol, possession, distribution or being under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or misuse of legal drugs is prohibited. Possession or use of fireworks or weapons is also prohibited. Adults who smoke must do so in a designated area out of sight of participants. All prescription medication must be checked in with a designated adult.
- 7.3. Between the beginning and end of a St. Matthias sponsored event for children or youth at which transportation is required there will be at

least one regular or occasional church worker per vehicle and in no case will there be one child, youth or helper alone in a vehicle with only one adult. All drivers must be at least 21 years old and must provide proof of auto insurance. All drivers under the age of 25 must provide a recent copy (within the previous 6 months) of their Colorado Motor Vehicle Driver Record.

- 7.4. All overnight St. Matthias events for children or youth must provide at least 8 hours of scheduled time for sleep.
- 7.5. Programs for infants and children under six (6) years old must have procedures to ensure that children are released only to their parents or legal guardians or those designated by them.

## **8. Pastoral Care.**

- 8.1. When one-on-one counseling is deemed necessary and/or requested by a child or youth, the adult supervisor must notify the rector or the rector's designee(s).
- 8.2. One-to-one counseling with children or youth must be done in an open or public where private conversations are possible but occur in full view of other adults.

## **9. Behavior and Conduct Policies.**

- 9.1. All regular and occasional church workers and helpers must agree to abide by the Policies for Ministry With Children or Youth and the Guidelines for Appropriate Affection.
- 9.2. Individuals working with children or youth in a care-giving role (including, but not limited to, all regular adult workers, occasional adult workers, and helpers) may not be dating, romantically involved, in a sexual relationship, and/or be acting in a way that is intended to lead to such a relationship with any child or youth in their care.
- 9.3. Church workers are prohibited from having sexual contact with a child or youth.
- 9.4. All regular or occasional church workers and helpers are not to give private personal gifts or money to children or youth.
- 9.5. Any clergy present at an event sponsored by St. Matthias is also subject to the "Ethical Guidelines of the Episcopal Diocese of Colorado."
- 9.6. Sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, videos, films, clothing, electronic medium, etc.) in the presence of children or youth are prohibited, except when, as part of an educational program, it is expressly permitted by the rector and with written parental permission.
- 9.7. Church workers are prohibited from using the Internet to view or

download any sexually oriented materials on church property or in the presence of children or youth.

- 9.8. Regular or occasional church workers and helpers are prohibited from discussing their own sexual activities, fantasies, or romantic relationships with children or youth.
- 9.9. Church workers are prohibited from sharing a bed, sleeping bag, tent, or hotel room with a child or youth.
- 9.10. Church workers are prohibited from dressing, undressing, bathing, or showering in the presence of children or youth.
- 9.11. Church workers are prohibited from using physical punishment in any way for behavior management of children or youth. No form of physical discipline is acceptable. 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.
- 9.12. Church workers are prohibited from using harsh language, degrading punishment, or mechanical restraint such as a rope or tape for behavior management.
- 9.13. Church workers are prohibited from participating in or allowing others to conduct any hazing activities relating to children's or youth ministry or camping activities.

## **10. Responding to problems**

- 10.1. Reporting Inappropriate Behaviors or Policy Violations with children or youth.
  - 10.1.1. When church workers observe inappropriate behaviors, behaviors that are inconsistent with the Guidelines for Appropriate Affection, or which may violate any provision of these Policies for Ministries With Children or Youth, they must immediately report their observations.
  - 10.1.2. Such inappropriate behaviors or possible policy violations that relate to interactions with children or youth should be reported in at least one of the following ways:
    - 1. A telephone call or meeting with the immediate supervisor of the person who the concern is about,
    - 2. A telephone call or meeting with the rector, if the person is not the rector;
    - 3. A telephone call or meeting with a church warden if the person is the rector.

- 10.1.3. All reports of inappropriate behavior or policy violations with children or youth will be taken seriously.
- 10.2. Reporting of suspected abuse of children or youth.
  - 10.2.1. All regular and occasional church workers are required by this policy to report any reasonable suspicion or known or suspected abuse of children or youth to the appropriate county department of human services or the local police or sheriff.
  - 10.2.2. In addition to reporting to the state authorities, church workers are required by this policy to report any suspected or known abuse of children or youth that may have been perpetrated by church workers directly to the rector of St. Matthias so that immediate and proper steps may be taken to ensure the safety of alleged victims.
  - 10.2.3. Reports of suspected or known abuse that involve church workers may be reported in the following ways:
    - 10.2.3.1 A telephone call, written correspondence, meeting with the rector, if the rector is not the person being complained about;
    - 10.2.3.2 A telephone call, meeting or fax to the bishop.
    - 10.2.3.3 Submit a *Notice of Concern* to the bishop.
  - 10.2.4. St. Matthias will cooperate with any investigation by the county department of human services or the local police or sheriff to the fullest extent appropriate and inform authorities that the Diocese of Colorado may direct a concurrent internal investigation.
- 10.3. Regular or occasional Church workers and helpers who learn about or report a harassment, misconduct or inappropriate behavior should not discuss such alleged harassment, misconduct or inappropriate behavior with anyone other than the rector (or bishop in the case of alleged misconduct by clergy) or those designated by the diocese to respond to such situations. No church workers or helpers are to “investigate” any suspected harassment, misconduct or inappropriate behavior.
- 10.4. All regular or occasional church workers and helpers must also immediately report to the rector and/or the supervisor of the program if a person under their care is:
  - 10.4.1. in immediate danger,
  - 10.4.2. the person has threatened harm to themselves or others

## 11. Appendix A - Guidelines for Appropriate Affection in Ministry with Children or Youth

The Diocese of Colorado and St. Matthias is committed to creating and promoting a positive, nurturing environment for our children's and youth ministries that protect our children and youth from abuse and our Church Workers from misunderstandings. When creating safe boundaries for children and youth, it is important to establish what types of affection are appropriate and inappropriate, otherwise that decision is left to each individual. Stating which behaviors are appropriate and inappropriate allows Church Workers to comfortably show positive affection in ministry, and yet identify individuals who are not maintaining safe boundaries with children or youth. These guidelines are based, in large part, on avoiding behaviors known to be used by child molesters to groom children or youth and their parents for future abuse. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by all Church Workers working around or with children or youth.

- 11.1. 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:
  - 11.1.1. · Brief hugs.
  - 11.1.2. · Pats on the shoulder or back.
  - 11.1.3. · Handshakes.
  - 11.1.4. “High-fives” and hand slapping.
  - 11.1.5. Verbal praise.
  - 11.1.6. Touching hands, faces, shoulders and arms of children or youth.
  - 11.1.7. Arms around shoulders.
  - 11.1.8. Holding hands while walking with small children.
  - 11.1.9. Sitting beside small children.
  - 11.1.10. Kneeling or bending down for hugs with small children.
  - 11.1.11. Holding hands during prayer.
  - 11.1.12. Pats on the head when culturally appropriate. (For example, this gesture should typically be avoided in some Asian communities).
- 11.2. The following forms of affection are considered **inappropriate** with children and youth in ministry setting because many of them are the behaviors that child molesters use to groom children or youth and their

parents for later molestation or can be, in and of themselves, sexual abuse.

- 11.2.1. Inappropriate or lengthy embraces.
- 11.2.2. Kisses on the mouth.
- 11.2.3. Holding children over three years old on the lap.
- 11.2.4. Touching bottoms, chests or genital areas other than for appropriate diapering or toileting of infants and toddlers.
- 11.2.5. Showing affection in isolated areas such as bedrooms, closets, staff only areas or other private rooms.
- 11.2.6. Occupying a bed with a child or youth
- 11.2.7. Touching knees or legs of children or youth.
- 11.2.8. Wrestling with children or youth.
- 11.2.9. Tickling children or youth.
- 11.2.10. Piggyback rides.
- 11.2.11. Any type of massage given by a child or youth to an adult.
- 11.2.12. Any type of massage given by an adult to a child or youth.
- 11.2.13. Any form of unwanted affection.
- 11.2.14. Comments or compliments (spoken, written, or electronic) that relate to physique or body development. Examples would be, "You sure are developing," or "You look really hot in those jeans."
- 11.2.15. Snapping bras or giving wedgies or similar touch of underwear whether or not it is covered by other clothing.
- 11.2.16. Giving gifts or money to individual children or youth.
- 11.2.17. Private meals with individual children or youth.