

***Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse
St. Matthew's Episcopal Church
Kenosha, Wisconsin***

April 2013

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, ideally, always be experienced as caring and without intention to do harm or allow harm to occur. This Code of Conduct has been adopted by **St. Matthew's Episcopal Church of Kenosha, Wisconsin**, 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 and within the Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse before agreeing to adhere to the statements and continue in service to the church.

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 policies for general conduct with children and youth as defined in these Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse.
- All Church personnel agree to comply with the Guidelines for Appropriate Affection with children and youth.
- All Church personnel acknowledge their obligation and responsibility to protect children and youth, and 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 to appropriate church leaders and state authorities in accordance with these policies.
- Church personnel understand that the church will not tolerate abuse of children and/or youth and agree to comply in spirit and in action with this position.

General Definitions:

- A. 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 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 parish, including those persons or agencies that contract their services to the parish.
 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 members of advisory boards, vestries, Bishop's Committees, and boards of directors and all other volunteers who work with children and youth.
- B. Children and Youth:** A child is defined as anyone under the age of 12 years. A youth is defined as anyone who is at least 12 years old but not yet 18 years old. A youth may also be an individual who is 18 years old or older but still in high school.

C. Regularly or Occasionally Work With or Around Children and/or Youth:

1. **Regularly** work with or around children and/or youth:

For the purpose of this policy, the following are included in the definition of Church personnel who **regularly** work with or around children and/or youth:

- a. All clergy, whether stipendiary, non-stipendiary or otherwise, who are engaged in ministry or service to the church.
- b. All paid or volunteer Church personnel who work throughout the facility or grounds or who have keys giving them access to the buildings on the grounds.
- c. All persons who supervise or assist with supervising children or youth in ministries, programs or activities more often than occasionally.
- d. All persons who provide transportation to children and/or youth without other adults in the vehicle more often than occasionally.
- e. Any paid personnel whose living quarters are on the grounds of the church, school or other related agency.
- f. All Vestry members or other members of similar decision-making groups who have the authority to approve the creation of ministries, programs or activities for children and/or youth.

Examples of Church personnel who **regularly** work with or around children and/or youth: include, but are not limited to:

- Children's and/or youth choir directors.
- Organists who work with children and/or youth.
- Lay youth ministers and Church school teachers.
- Volunteer youth directors.
- Acolyte coordinator.

- Everyone 16 or older who works or assists in the nursery more than four times a year.
- All Church personnel who work in the nursery if they are the only person over 21 present at any time.
- All staff, whether volunteer or paid, at church camps.
- Adults who participate in overnight activities with children and/or youth.

2. **Occasionally** work with or around children and/or youth

For the purpose of this policy, the following are included in the definition of Church personnel who **occasionally** work with or around children and/or youth:

- a. All persons who supervise or assist with supervising children and/or youth in ministries, programs or activities infrequently, generally no more than three times a year or for one program or activity during a year that lasts less than a month (i.e., assisting with preparation for the Christmas pageant).
- b. All persons who provide transportation to children and/or youth without other adults in the vehicle infrequently, generally no more than three times a year.
- c. All persons who work or assist in the nursery four or fewer times a year, whether on an emergency basis or otherwise.

D. Types of Abuse:

1. **Physical abuse** is non-accidental injury that is intentionally inflicted upon a child and/or youth.
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 that is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of the adult, youth or child.
3. **Sexual abuse perpetrated by a child or youth** is any contact or activity of a sexual nature that occurs between a child or youth and another child or youth or adult 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 that is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of any of the children or youth.
4. **Emotional abuse** is mental or emotional injury to a child or youth that results in material impairment in the child or youth's growth, development or psychological functioning.
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.
6. **Economic exploitation** is the deliberate misplacement, theft, exploitation or wrongful temporary or permanent use of a child or youth's belongings or money.

Safeguards for Children and Youth

A. Screening and Selection

1. Any and all Church personnel who **regularly** work with or around children and/or youth shall be screened and selected utilizing at least the following:
 - a. A standard employment form completed by the applicant that includes the Code of Conduct (Appendix B) and an authorization for the release of information to conduct background checks.
 - b. Criminal Records Check in any state where the applicant has resided during the past seven (7) years and other states, if any, as determined by the church.
 - c. Sexual Offender Registry Check in any state where the applicant has resided during the past seven (7) years.
 - d. Individual Interview with the applicant.
 - e. Reference Checks of no fewer than three persons outside the congregation who know the applicant, preferably who know how the applicant works with children.
 - f. Driving or Motor Vehicle Records Check if the person may be transporting children and/or youth.
2. Any and all Church personnel who **occasionally** work with or around children and/or youth shall be screened and selected utilizing at least the following:
 - a. A standard employment form completed by the applicant that includes the Code of Conduct (Appendix B) and an authorization for the release of information to conduct background checks.
 - b. Sexual Offender Registry Check in any state where the applicant has resided during the past seven (7) years.
 - c. Individual Interview with the applicant.
 - d. Reference Check of at least one person outside the congregation who knows the applicant, preferably who knows how the applicant works with children.
 - e. Driving or Motor Vehicle Records Check if the person will be transporting children and/or youth.
3. All information gathered about an applicant will be carefully reviewed and evaluated to make a determination, in consultation with others as necessary, of whether or not the person is appropriate to work with children and/or youth.
4. Church personnel who work with or around children and/or youth must have a personnel file that is kept where other church records are kept.
5. Criminal records checks will be conducted every five (5) years for Church personnel who **regularly** work with or around children and/or youth.
6. Sexual offender registry checks will be conducted every five (5) years for Church personnel who **regularly** or **occasionally** work with or around children and/or youth.
7. To the extent possible, no person will be permitted to supervise in an employment and/or volunteer relationship an immediate family member when working with or

around children and/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.

B. Education and Training Requirements

1. Three (3) hours of child abuse prevention education and training is required for all Church personnel who **regularly** or **occasionally** work with or around children and/or youth before they start their work. The training must be repeated every five years for all personnel and volunteers. No more than six months of service will be allowed before the Diocesan-approved training is completed.
2. Church personnel who are responsible for screening, selection and supervision of personnel in programs for children and/or youth are required to complete an additional three (3) hours of specialized education and training in screening, selection and monitoring every two years. No more than six months of service will be allowed before the Diocesan-approved training is completed.

C. Monitoring and Supervision of Programs

The monitoring and supervision of programs and activities involving children and/or youth is important for safeguarding children and youth and involves several aspects. One aspect involves having structural guidelines or standards for the programs and activities for children and youth. These include such things as who approves new programs, how many adults need to be present and the like. In addition to setting structural guidelines and standards, Church leaders must make sure the structural safeguards are followed. Programs and activities have to be monitored and supervised to do that.

Another aspect of monitoring and supervision is that supervisory personnel and others monitor and supervise the behavior of adults, youth and children with children and youth so that inappropriate behaviors and interactions can be detected and stopped. Some behaviors and interactions are potentially harmful to children and/or youth in and of themselves. Examples include providing alcohol or other drugs to children and/or youth or actually having sexual contact with a child or youth (See **Appendix A – Appropriate Guidelines for Affection**). Other behaviors and interactions are not necessarily harmful in and of themselves but are the same behaviors and interactions known to be used by those who abuse children and/or youth to “groom” them or their parents for eventual abuse or which provide the privacy child molesters need in order to abuse children and/or youth.

The structural guidelines and standards are covered in both this *Monitoring and Supervision of Programs* section and in the following section, *General Conduct for the Protection of Children and Youth*. The behaviors and interactions of persons with children and/or youth that need to be monitored and supervised are covered in the section on *General Conduct for the Protection of Children and Youth* and in *Appendix A – Guidelines for Appropriate Affection*.

1. Every program and activity for children and youth must have established ratios for adults and children. Compliance with the established ratio is required at all times, including activities that occur off church premises. There will be no fewer than one adult with every five children and/or youth.

2. To the extent possible, there must be at least two unrelated adults present at all events and ministries for children and/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. Church personnel are prohibited from being alone with a child or youth or multiple children or youth where other adults cannot easily observe them.
 - a. If unanticipated circumstances result in an adult being alone with children and/or youth, that adult shall immediately report those circumstances to the Rector or Senior Warden.
 - b. No event for children and/or youth shall take place in a private residence without prior approval by the Rector. If the Rector’s home is being considered, Vestry approval is required, and at least one adult unrelated to the Rector must be present.
 - c. It may be appropriate for a Sunday School class or nursery to have only one teacher as long as at least one other adult can maintain visual or auditory contact with the teacher or make regular, unplanned visits in order to observe the interactions between the teacher and children and/or youth.
3. Adult Church personnel (over the age of 21) must directly supervise Church personnel **under** the age of 21 and be physically present during all activities.
4. An up to date list of approved congregation-sponsored programs for children and/or youth will be maintained in the Church office or other place where Church records are kept.
5. Any new programs, trips, or events that involve children or youth should be given prior approval by the Rector. Requests to develop new activities should be submitted in writing and outline appropriate and adequate adult supervision that will be present.
6. Each program will develop age-appropriate procedures to ensure the safety of children and/or youth using restrooms and showers or baths.
7. When supervising or assisting private activities such as dressing, showering, toileting or diapering infants or children, Church personnel will remain in an area observable by other adults or work in pairs.

D. General Conduct 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/or youth. With the help of these guidelines it may be possible to identify and stop those behaviors that may be inherently harmful to children and/or youth and are the type used by child molesters to groom children, youth and their parents, or that may create the conditions where abuse can occur more easily. These guidelines should also be used to make decisions about interactions with children and/or youth in Church-sponsored and affiliated programs. They are not designed or intended to address interactions within families. When exceptions to these guidelines must be made, they should be reported to the supervisor of the Church personnel making the exception as soon as possible.

1. All Church personnel who work with children and/or youth must agree to comply with the St. Matthew's Church Guidelines for Appropriate Affection (Appendix A).
2. No person will be allowed to volunteer to **regularly** work with children and/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 while participating in or assisting with programs or activities specifically for children and/or youth.
5. Parents or guardians must complete written permission forms before Church personnel transport children and/or youth for a Church-sponsored activity or for any purpose on more than an occasional basis (generally no more than three (3) times per year).
6. Church personnel will respond to children and youth with respect, consideration and equal treatment, regardless of sex, race, religion, sexual orientation, culture or socio-economic 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 or 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, images, cards, videos, films, clothing materials display on an electronic device, etc.) on Church property or in the presence of children or youth except as expressly permitted as part of a pre-authorized educational program.
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 or 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, tents, hotel rooms or other rooms with children or youth unless the adult is an immediate family member of all children or youth in the bed, sleeping bag, tent, hotel room or other room. It is acceptable to have multiple adults sleep with all the children and/or youth participating in one open space such as a church basement or camp lodge.
14. Church personnel are prohibited from dressing, undressing, bathing, or showering in the presence of children or youth unless they are in separate stalls.
15. Church personnel are prohibited from using physical punishment in any way for behavior management of children and/or 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 child, youth or another person or persons.
16. Church personnel are prohibited from using harsh language, degrading punishment or mechanical restraint such as rope or tape for behavior management.
17. Church personnel are prohibited from participating in or allowing others to conduct any hazing activities relating to children's or youth ministry or camp activities.

Responding to Problems

A. Reporting Inappropriate Behaviors or Policy Violations with Children and/or Youth

1. When Church personnel (volunteer or paid staff) observe any inappropriate behaviors, behaviors that are inconsistent with the *Guidelines for Appropriate Affection*, or which may violate any provision of these *Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse*, they must **immediately** report their observations.
2. All reports of inappropriate behavior or policy violations with children and/or youth will be taken seriously.

3. Clergy as Mandatory Reporters of Child Abuse and Neglect

Citation: Wis. Stat. Ann. § 48.981(2)(b) (LexisNexis through 2009 Wis. Act 185)

Except as provided below, a member of the clergy shall report if the member of the clergy has reasonable cause to suspect that a child seen by the member of the clergy in the course of his or her professional duties:

Has been abused

Has been threatened with abuse, and abuse of the child will likely occur

Except as provided below, a member of the clergy shall report if the member of the clergy has reasonable cause, based on observations made or information that he or she receives, to suspect that a member of the clergy has done any of the following:

Abused a child

Threatened a child with abuse, and abuse of the child will likely occur

A member of the clergy is not required to report child abuse information that he or she receives solely through confidential communications made to him or her privately or in a confessional setting if he or she is authorized to hear or is accustomed to hearing such communications and, under the disciplines, tenets, or traditions of his or her religion, has a duty or is expected to keep those communications secret. Those disciplines, tenets, or traditions need not be in writing.

4. Such inappropriate behaviors or possible policy violations that relate to interactions with children and/or youth should be **immediately** reported in one of the following ways:
 - a. If the Rector is the alleged perpetrator, the **Bishop** of the Episcopal Diocese of Milwaukee should be notified at (414) 291-2883 (Extension 154) or 414-272-3028
 - b. In all other cases, the following procedure should be followed:
 - 1) A telephone call or meeting with the **Rector**; or
 - 2) If the Rector is not available the **Senior Warden** should be contacted; or
 - 3) If the Rector or the Senior Warden is not immediately available, contact the **Bishop** of the Episcopal Diocese of Milwaukee.
5. The **Rector** or the **Senior Warden** or the **Bishop** are required by this policy to **immediately** report known or suspected abuse of children or youth to **(first to a and then b and/or c)**:

- a. The parents or guardians of the alleged victim and the parents or guardians of the alleged perpetrator if the perpetrator is a minor.
- b. **Kenosha County Division of Human Services Department of Children and Family Services**
 - Weekdays phone: 262-605-6582
 - After hours, weekends and holidays phone: 262-657-7188

The **Rector** or the **Senior Warden** or Bishop will need to provide:

- 1) A description of the occurrence;
- 2) Time, date and location of the occurrence;
- 3) Name(s) of the alleged victim(s);
- 4) Name(s) of the perpetrator(s);
- 5) Name(s) of those who were present at the time of the occurrence.
- 6) Name(s), address(es) and telephone number(s) of the parent(s) and/or guardian(s) of the alleged victim(s);
- 7) Name(s), address(es) and telephone number(s) of the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the alleged perpetrator(s) if the perpetrator(s) is/are under the age of majority.

Kenosha County Division of Children and Family Services may begin a **confidential investigation**. As a consequence of the investigation, they may contact the appropriate law enforcement agency when their investigation is completed.

- c. **Kenosha Police Department or the law enforcement jurisdiction in which the purported abuse took place.**

Kenosha Police Department – 262-656-1234

Note: Failure to report suspected abuse of children or youth may be a crime. 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.

6. The **Rector** or the **Senior Warden** will take immediate and proper steps to ensure the safety of the alleged victim(s).
7. The **Rector** must report known or suspected abuse to the Diocese of Milwaukee in one of the following ways:
 - a. a telephone call;
 - b. meeting; or
 - c. written communication (not via e-mail) to the **Bishop**.

The date, time, and scope of the communication with the Diocese shall be documented in writing.

8. Reports of suspected or known abuse that involve Church personnel must be reported to the Insurance Carrier for the Church.
9. The Diocese of Milwaukee and St. Matthew's Episcopal Church will cooperate with any investigation by state authorities to the fullest extent appropriate and inform authorities that a concurrent internal investigation will be directed by the Diocese of Milwaukee.

B. The Investigation Process in Responding to Suspected Abuse of Children or Youth.

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church will respond promptly to investigate any accusation of abuse. All accusations of abuse will be taken seriously. It is important to be appropriately respectful to the needs and feelings of those who allege abuse and those who have been accused of abuse. When an allegation is made involving abuse, the person reporting the complaint is to be given a copy of the procedures to be followed (as noted below).

1. St. Matthew's Episcopal Church will take all required **reporting** actions as noted in Section A: **Reporting Inappropriate Behaviors or Policy Violations with Children or Youth.**
2. Kenosha County Division of Children and Family Services and/or Law Enforcement will investigate and take appropriate legal action.
3. Additionally, St. Matthew's Episcopal Church may carry out its own investigation should Kenosha County Division of Children and Family Services and/or Law Enforcement not take legal action and if the behavior is deemed to be in violation of the *Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse*.
4. St. Matthew's Episcopal Church may suspend the alleged offender (paid staff or volunteer) while a confidential investigation is being conducted. Paid staff will be suspended with pay.
5. St. Matthew's Episcopal Church Rector shall appoint a team of at least two professionals to act "on behalf of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church" for purposes of the investigation. The team members should not be members of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church and they should have professional qualifications and training in the abuse of children and/or youth. The team will carry out its investigation in a confidential manner and with sensitivity to all parties involved in the potential abuse. The team may also have an additional member as legal counsel.
6. One professional on the team will meet with the alleged perpetrator; the second professional will meet with the alleged victim and any others with knowledge of relevant facts.
7. The "team" will prepare a report that includes their finding and recommendations for action. The "team" should report their findings and recommendations to the Rector and it is his/her discretion to take further action. According to the Canons of the Episcopal Church: Title III, Canon 9, Section 5 (a):

The Rector or Priest-in-Charge shall have full authority and responsibility for the conduct of the worship and the spiritual jurisdiction of the Parish, subject to the Rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer, the Constitution and Canons of this Church, and the pastoral direction of the Bishop

8. The Rector will meet with the alleged perpetrator and notify him/her of the results of the investigation and recommendations for action.
9. The Rector will meet with the alleged victim, along with his/her parents or guardians, and notify them of the results of the investigation and recommendations for action.
10. The Rector will provide a summary of the actions to the Bishop.

APPENDIX

A. Guidelines for Appropriate Affection:

The Diocese of Milwaukee and St. Matthew's Parish are 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 personnel 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 personnel to comfortably show positive affection in ministry and yet identify individuals who are not maintaining safe boundaries with children and/or youth. These Guidelines are based, in large part, on avoiding behaviors known to be used by child molesters to groom children and/or 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/or 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/or youth.

Some **Positive and Appropriate** forms of affection are listed below:

- Brief hugs.
 - Pats on the shoulder or back.
 - Handshakes.
 - "High-fives."
 - Verbal praise.
 - Touching hands, faces, shoulders and arms of children and/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/or youth in ministry settings because many of them are the behaviors that child molesters use to groom children and/or youth and their parents 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 and/or youth.
 - Being nude in front of children and/or youth.
 - Showing favoritism.

- Touching knees or legs of children and/or youth.
- Wrestling with children and/or youth.
- Tickling children and/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. Examples would be, "You sure are developing," or "You look really hot in those jeans."
- 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 and/or youth.
- Private meals with individual children and/or youth.
- Taking pictures while children and/or youth are dressing or undressing.
- Wearing revealing or provocative clothing.
- Any form of unwanted attention.
- Touching or hugging from behind.

B. Employment Form, Code of Conduct, Acknowledgment, Release and Signature

At St. Matthew's Episcopal Church the application form is a separate document that is completed by the potential employee or volunteer prior to a formal offer. When an offer has been made, the individual will then be asked to fill out an employment form that contains the following "Code of Content," an authorization for release for a background check, date of birth and social security number.

Code of Conduct:

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

1. _____ (initial) I agree to do my best to prevent abuse and neglect among children and/or youth involved in Church activities and services.
2. _____ (initial) I agree not to physically, sexually or emotionally abuse or neglect a child or youth.
3. _____ (initial) 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.
4. _____ (initial) I agree to comply with the Guidelines for Appropriate Affection with children and youth.
5. _____ (initial) In the event that I observe any inappropriate behaviors or possible policy violations with children and/or youth, I agree to immediately report my observations.
6. _____ (initial) I acknowledge my obligation and responsibility to protect children and youth and agree to report known or suspected abuse of children and/or youth to appropriate Church leaders and county authorities in accordance with the Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse.
7. _____ (initial) I understand that the Church will not tolerate abuse of children and/or youth. I agree to comply in spirit and in action with this position.

Acknowledgment, Release and Signature

To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in the application form and the employment form is complete and accurate. I understand that providing false information is grounds for not hiring or choosing me for a volunteer position and for my discharge if I have already been hired or chosen.

I authorize any person or organization, whether or not identified in this application form and this employment form, to provide any information concerning my previous employment, education, credit history, driving record, criminal conviction record, sexual offender registry or other qualifications for my employment or volunteering. I also authorize St. Matthew's Episcopal Church to request and receive such information.

If hired or chosen, I agree to be bound by St. Matthew Episcopal Church's policies and procedures, including but not limited to its Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse and Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children and Youth. I understand that these may be changed, withdrawn, added to or interpreted at any time at the sole discretion of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church and without prior notice to me.

I also understand that my employment or volunteering may be terminated, or any offer or acceptance of employment or volunteering withdrawn, at any time, with or without cause, and with or without prior notice at the option of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church or myself.

Nothing contained in this application form and this employment form or in any pre-employment or pre-volunteering communication is intended to or creates a contract between myself and St. Matthew's Episcopal Church for either employment or volunteering or the providing of any benefit.

I have read and understand the above provisions.

Signature

Date

B. Background Check Process:

The Executive Committee of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church has delegated the responsibility for requesting, evaluating, and securely storing all background checks to the Rector or his/her designee.

1. When application forms and employment forms have been completed and authorization has been secured from the individual to be employed as a paid employee or a volunteer (Appendix B), the Rector or his/her designee will request a background check from the Wisconsin Department of Justice and /or LexisNexis.
2. When the background check is received it will be evaluated by the Rector and at least one member of the Vestry.
3. If there are no items of concern, the background check will be filed in a secure file maintained by the Rector or his/her designee.
4. If items are noted that raise questions, the employee/volunteer will be contacted by the Rector or his/her designee and given an opportunity to clarify the items noted on the background check.
5. If the explanation is satisfactory, it will be written up and signed by the employee/volunteer, the Rector and the Vestry member and filed with the background check.
6. If the explanation is not satisfactory, additional background checks will be conducted.
7. If additional background checks confirm the original background check and provide additional cause for concern, the employee/volunteer will be terminated.

When background checks have been completed, a form will be placed in the employee's/volunteer's file that indicates the background check has been completed and is satisfactory. **The background check will not be filed in the employee's/volunteer's file.**

The background checks will be placed in a secure file that is only accessible by the Rector and his/her designee.

*Approved by the St. Matthew's Episcopal Church Vestry
on April 9, 2013*

Acknowledgements:

Material in this document was adapted from the following publications:

- a. Model Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse prepared by the Church Pension Group, Serving the Episcopal Church and its People – April, 2004
- b. Healthy Church Practices in the Diocese of Milwaukee prepared by the Milwaukee Diocese of the Episcopal Church – April, 2009
- c. Children and Youth Abuse Prevention Program prepared by Church Mutual Insurance- April, 2010
- d. Policies Regarding Allegations and Incidents of Sexual Misconduct and Child Abuse by Clergy, Employees and Volunteers in the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh, April, 2002