

FIVE STEPS TO KEEP CHILDREN SAFE AT CORPUS CHRISTI ANGLICAN CHURCH

Step One:

SCREENING is an opportunity to prevent a molester from ever having contact with children and youth in our programs. Our careful screening of employees and volunteers in youth and children's ministries includes:

1. Reviewing signed standard applications for all paid staff and for all volunteers in youth and children's ministries.
2. Conducting National Sexual Offender Registry/Criminal Background checks and renewing them every two years.
3. Conducting personal and professional reference checks.
4. Conducting face to face interviews when necessary.
5. Requiring a signature stating that clergy, employees, volunteers and other adult members of their households have not been arrested for or convicted of child abuse or diagnosed with certain psychiatric conditions such as voyeurism or exhibitionism.
6. Requiring a six-month minimum attendance rule for all volunteers serving in children's and youth ministries

No exceptions in our screening standards will occur for people we know.

Step Two:

TRAINING puts the power to protect in everyone's hands and is an important deterrent to child abuse. Those who work with children or youth must be trained to recognize the warning signs of potential abuse, commit to the safe practices specific to Corpus Christi Anglican Church and learn the procedures for reporting suspected abuse.

Reading Requirements

All members of the clergy, all members of the vestry, and those staff members with direct supervision over youth or children must certify that they have read, understood and accepted the Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic (DOMA) Policies on the Protection of Children and sign an acknowledgement form.

Workshop Attendance Requirements

Every two years, our clergy, vestry, staff and volunteers who have contact with youth and children must complete a DOMA approved workshop or the online Sexual Abuse Prevention Course and follow-up test provided by Ministry Safe.



Step Three:

INTERACTING GUIDELINES help children and adults feel safe in ministry and help detect problems before they turn into an incident of abuse.

Verbal interactions between clergy, staff members, or volunteers and children should be positive, constructive and encouraging. Staff members and volunteers should avoid talking to children or parents in a way that is or could be construed by any reasonable observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating.

Facebook and all social media avenues are important ways for youth ministry staff and volunteer leaders to connect with students. Clergy, staff members and volunteers shall refrain from connecting with students on social media when students are younger than the minimum age as established by each social media outlet (for example, Facebook's minimum age is currently 13). Corpus Christi Anglican Church's proactive policy for social media includes. . .

Photos of children will not be used contrary to parental wishes. Corpus Christi Anglican Church will refrain from posting any personally identifying information about children pictured online or in print publications without prior parental permission.

Children's staff members and volunteers are responsible for protecting children under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch.

Physical contact should be for the benefit of the child and never be based on the emotional needs of a staff member or volunteer. It is the diocesan policy that staff members and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any manner for the behavioral management of children. No form of physical discipline is acceptable.

Appropriate interactions may include:

- Smiles
- Encouragement
- Handshakes and high fives
- Fist bumps
- Thumbs up
- Side to side hugs
- Pats on the shoulder or back
- Arm around the shoulder
- Holding hands while walking with small children
- Holding or picking up children who are 4 years old and younger



Other Corpus Christi Anglican Church interactions that are appropriate include:

- “Remember-Chair” Time-Outs and other non-physical methods of behavior management

Inappropriate interactions include:

- Spanking, slapping, or any form of physical discipline
- Shaming or belittling a child or youth
- Meeting alone in non-public or isolated places
- Swearing in the presence of children
- Engaging in sexually oriented communications with or in proximity to children
- Use, possession or being under the influence of tobacco products, alcohol, or any illegal drugs when in the presence of children
- Wrestling
- Tickling
- Sitting in laps (except for nursery-aged children)
- Kissing on the lips
- Full frontal hugs or “bear hugs”
- Commenting on children’s bodies
- Forcing unwanted affection
- Being nude in front of children



Other interactions that are inappropriate include:

- Contacting or “friending” a child or youth on “Facebook” or other social networking sites without the parent’s permission
- Showing favoritism or possessiveness
- Calling, emailing, or texting too often (singling a child out)
- Giving gifts to children without the parent’s permission
- Ridiculing the beliefs of a child or youth’s parent
- Allowing a child or youth to do things against the wishes of the parents
- Offering children or youth cigarettes, alcohol, or drugs
- Allowing children or youth to view pornography or to visit inappropriate internet sites
- Asking a child or youth to keep “secrets” from his or her parents
- Wearing provocative or revealing attire
- Staring while others are dressing
- Taking pictures while children are dressing or showering



Step Four:

MONITORING allows us to detect problems before they turn into an incident of abuse and helps adults avoid wrongful allegations of abuse when none has occurred. Research confirms that off-site activities increase the risk of abuse. **Vestry, clergy, staff and volunteers must be diligent in monitoring and supervising children's and youth activities in all settings at all times.**

Our monitoring practices include the following:

- All children and youth activities shall be designed to be supervised by two or more screened and trained individuals at all times
- No child or youth will ever be left unattended during or following a church activity
- Clergy, staff members, and volunteers should not conduct unobserved meetings or interactions with children or youth
- In a discipleship or mentoring relationship, the interactions should occur in a public place or where other persons are present
- Watching for and responding to policy violations
- An open invitation for parents to visit at any time unannounced
- A careful review of new programs and/or significant changes to a program structure
- Keeping interaction with children in full view of others at all times
- Keeping unused rooms locked
- Keeping children and youth in supervised areas
- An onsite or offsite written Supervisory Plan, that includes all items detailed on pages 20 or 21 of the DOMA policy, shall be in place for all educational, pastoral, recreational, or other programming that involves youth or children. Those tasked with supervising youth or children for a specific program must understand their responsibilities as outlined and sign a copy of the specific supervision plan.



Under our monitoring umbrella, the following restroom policy is in effect during all children's programming:

- Children who require diapering will have diapers changed by child's own parents exclusively.
- Children who are nursery aged and being potty-trained will have a parent escort them to the restroom.
- Elementary aged children will be escorted to the restroom by two screened and trained individuals or by parents.



Special needs or children who are only four years old may be assisted by staff or children's ministry volunteers in compliance with policy.



- When children are present in the sanctuary, parents are expected to accompany their elementary aged child to the restroom or send them with an older sibling; we ask this knowing that restrooms are the most likely place for abuse to occur in an institutional setting.

Step Five:

RESPONDING quickly gives us the power to prevent or stop abuse and gives the child more time to heal.

If a child discloses abuse, remember to:

- Respect the child's privacy by finding a private, non-threatening place to talk (such as the workroom in children's wing)
- Ask a staff member or trained volunteer to join in listening to the child or youth's account if possible
- Keep calm, listen and avoid expressing shock or outrage
- Let the child or youth know that he or she is believed
- Assure the child or youth that the abuse was not his or her fault
- Tell the child or youth, if helpful, that they were brave to disclose
- Avoid questions that could make the child or youth feel responsible or plant ideas that could taint their recollection and account. Child victims are often vague in their initial disclosure
- Write down as accurately as possible what the child or youth disclosed. This information can be used in filing the Report of Suspected Abuse Form for the Diocese and the CPS report if warranted
- Be careful afterwards not to discuss the information with or in front of other people who do not need to know what happened

Remember to:

Report the abuse allegation to one of the children's catechists or the Rector.

Report to Legal Authorities

STATE CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE NUMBER
LOCAL CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES NUMBER

1-800-552-7096
703-324-7400

