

The Episcopal Church of Saints James and Andrew

Safe Church Policy

Preamble

The aim of this policy is to make our Church a safe place, safe for those who worship, safe for those who minister, safe for those who come in need, safe for children and safe for all who seek to serve Christ. We believe that this policy helps us live out our Baptismal covenant to respect the dignity of every human being.

Screening and Selection for Ministry with Children and Youth

All clergy, staff, and volunteers who regularly work with children, youth, or homebound parishioners will have a background check. Volunteers should not be permitted to work with children or youth until they have been known to the clergy or congregation for at least six months.

Behavior Standards for Ministry with Children and Youth

Adults shall never, under any circumstances: provide children or youth with non-sacramental alcohol, illegal drugs, or pornography; consume non-sacramental alcohol or illegal drugs or misuse legal drugs at any children's or youth event; be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs or the misuse of legal drugs at any children's or youth event; engage in illegal behavior or permit other adults or children or youth to engage in illegal behavior; engage in any sexual, romantic, illicit or secretive relationship or conduct with any child or youth; discuss their own sexual activities or fantasies with children or youth.

Monitoring Programs and Interactions with Children and Youth

Plans for all events and ministries for children and youth should include at least two unrelated adults present at all times. If unanticipated circumstances result in an adult being alone with children or youths, that adult shall immediately report those circumstances to the Rector, Associate Rector, or a Co-Warden. It is appropriate for a Sunday School class to have only one teacher so long as at least one other adult can maintain visual contact with the teacher.

Any new programs, trips or events that involve children or youth should be given prior approval by the Rector and the Vestry.

No event for children or youth shall take place in a private residence without prior approval by the Vestry.

Adults who work with children or youth should be discouraged from having a separate and private relationship with any unrelated child from the church away from sanctioned church or youth activities.

There will be a Safe Church Minister who is current on safe church issues and training and is not otherwise an employee of the parish. The Safe Church Minister should be consulted by the Rector, Associate Rector, Vestry members or others on safe church matters, and should report all questionable or non-standard arrangements to the Rector, Associate Rector or a Co-Warden. It is recommended that the Safe Church Minister and the Vestry conduct a safe church audit to review practices and policies within the congregation every two years.

This policy shall be posted in areas where activities for children and youth take place and should be given to all adults who regularly work with children or youth and to parents.

Miscellaneous

Firearms and concealed weapons are prohibited at any church activity or on church grounds. The Rector may make special exceptions for off-duty police officers or others required to carry firearms.

Church computers and internets should have adequate password protection. Any activity on a parish computer is not considered private and may be accessed by authorized persons.

Education and Training

All clergy, staff, and volunteers who work with children, youth, or homebound parishioners are required to attend a Safe Church Training every three years, or as often as the Diocese requires, and learn how to prevent child abuse and promote healthy boundaries in church settings. There is a list maintained by Clergy and the Safe Church Minister.

Responding to Concerns

Anyone who knows of a violation of this policy or the Diocesan Safe Church Policy in a parish environment shall immediately report the violation to the Rector, Associate Rector and Co-Wardens. Anyone who knows of a violation of these policies in a diocesan environment or by a clergy person shall contact the Diocesan Intake Officer to report the concerns.

Anyone who has reason to suspect that child abuse has taken place, whether at church or away from church, shall report it to the appropriate civil authority.

Upon hearing a report of violation, the Rector shall contact the Intake Office in consultation about potential responses. The Rector and/or the Intake Officer shall be responsible for providing appropriate pastoral care to all those affected and

appropriate remedial and/or disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment or volunteer ministry with the church.

Contact Information

The Episcopal Church of Saints James and Andrew
8 Church Street, Greenfield, MA 01301.
www.saintsjamesandandrew.org
office@saintsjamesandandrew.org
(413) 773-3925

The Rector is the Reverend Heather J. Blais,
heather.blais@gmail.com, (413) 773-3925

The Associate Rector is Reverend Dr. Molly Scherm
mollyscherm@gmail.com, (508) 561-0197.

The Safe Church Minister for SsJA is Erica Burns.
ericaburns@gmail.com, (413) 230-4458.

The Bishop's Office at the Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts is located at 37 Chestnut Street, Springfield, Massachusetts, 01103, (413) 737-4786,
www.diocesewma.org.

The Safe Church Officer for the Diocese is the Reverend Tanya Wallace,
allsaintschurchrector@gmail.com Contact her with general questions about trainings or safe church policy.

The Intake Office for the Diocese is the Reverend Molly Scherm,
mollyerscherm@gmail.com. Contact her to report suspected misconduct.

The phone number to report suspected child abuse in Massachusetts is 1-800-792-5200 or you can call the Department of Social Services in your area.