

St. Paul's: Maintaining a Safe Church

We are committed to the physical, sexual and emotional safety of all members, employees, and guests of St. Paul's Church, and insist that the dignity of each person be respected.

The safety of all at Saint Paul's is the responsibility of all. Let us all work together to make sure that our church is safe for all.

Please report any known or suspected problems to the clergy, the wardens, or the appropriate program leader. Or you may call the church office to be directed to the most appropriate report person.

William Healey, the Sexton, is the person to contact for physical plant concerns. The vestry has appointed report persons regarding sexual conduct (listed below). All reports will be considered seriously and be treated with careful discretion. If you are uncomfortable making a report on sexual conduct within the parish, you may call one of the diocesan report persons (listed below).

TO REPORT A PROBLEM

TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Church Office 294-4357

The Rev. W. David Dobbins, Interim Rector 294-4357 (ext. 104) or at home: 295-5140

Ms. Debra Ann Mahoney, Parish Administrator 294-4357 (ext. 100) or at home: 884-1980

Physical Safety

Mr. William Healey, Sexton 294-4357 (ext. 101) or at home: 294-6176

Sunday School

Mrs. Lori Lamb, Church School 294-4357 (ext. 300) or at home: 294-9908

Youth

The Rev. Patrick Greene 294-4357 (ext. 105) or at home: 316-1692

Music

Dr. Mark Steinbach, Director of Music & Liturgy 294-4357 (ext. 106) or at home: 272-2502

Ms. Rozanne Fuller, Children's Choir 294-9683

Wardens

Raymond Jorgensen, Senior Warden 465-6066

Katherine Bellows, Junior Warden 295-1108

Parish Sexual Safety Report Persons

The Rector and Wardens

Diocesan Sexual Safety Report Persons

The Rev. Pamela Rannenberg 295-1379

Ms. Elizabeth Fornal 274-4500 (ext. 225) or at home: 885-0394

Mr. Tylan Creason 274-4500 (ext. 242) or cell 241-5080

Ms. Caryl Frink 231-0412

The Rev. Sandra Haines-Murdocco, Ascension, Wakefield 783-2911 or at home: 792-9179

Sexual abuse of children (required report to the State) 1-800-RI-CHILD

A full copy of the St. Paul's Safe Church policy is available in the church office and is posted on the St. Paul's web site: www.stpaulswickford.org

Updated August 2011

Saint Paul's Church in Wickford, RI

Physical Safety

The Plant

St. Paul's Church works to foster and maintain a safe physical environment in all of its buildings, grounds, and properties.

Buildings, grounds, and properties are maintained in accordance with (but not necessarily being limited by or restricted to) all applicable state and local codes, statutes, and regulations, as well as any additional standards or requirements cited by our insurer.

The vestry, through the work of the Property Committee, makes recommendations on an on-going basis for safety improvements to be integrated into the planning, maintenance, and budgetary processes.

Weather Conditions

During inclement weather conditions, access to and between buildings and parking areas will be maintained in as safe a condition as time and severity of conditions will allow. St. Paul's has policies in effect for group notifications in the event that weather conditions compel the cancellation of any activities or events.

The sexton maintains adequate supplies and equipment for shoveling and sanding/salting of walkways, public sidewalks, and steps, and insures that a snowplowing contract is in effect at the beginning of each winter season for the clearing of the parking lot and driveways.

Fire Safety

In addition to physical plant considerations as per "The Plant" above, St. Paul's maintains a proactive stance towards fire prevention by maintaining an ongoing assessment of all relevant activities, practices, and procedures.

The Church maintains its properties in accordance with (but not limited by or restricted to): RI Fire Safety Code; NFPA 1 *Uniform Fire Code*; NFPA 101 *Life Safety Code*; insurance requirements.

Alcohol and Drugs

Use of or visible possession of illegal drugs or unauthorized alcohol on or within the buildings or properties of St. Paul's is not permitted.

Over-the-counter medications ancillary to first aid kits will be kept securely in said kits at all times when not in actual use.

Handicapped Access

To the greatest extent possible, St. Paul's provides and maintains handicapped access to all publicly accessible buildings and areas, as well as adequate signage to guide persons to the appropriate areas of handicapped access and parking.

Street Crossing

Children in church school or other youth ministries or activities (e.g. youth choir, etc.) will not cross streets except under the immediate supervision and direction of one or more responsible adults.

Children will only be crossed directly in front of the church or parish hall.

First Aid

Appropriate first aid kits are available for the immediate treatment of minor injuries. They are located in the sacristy in the Church and in the Parish House kitchen.

How to Report a Problem

All non-emergency maintenance or safety problems should be promptly reported to the office for referral to the sexton or appropriate maintenance committee person. ALL emergencies or potential emergencies should be reported IMMEDIATELY to 911 before any self-remedy (first aid, fire extinguisher, etc.) is attempted. If more than one person is present, these functions may be carried out simultaneously.

Non -Discrimination on the Basis of Handicap/Disability

It is the policy of St. Paul's Church to follow the guidelines of nondiscrimination on the basis of handicapping conditions as outlined in 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. In doing so, the Church:

Does not discriminate against a qualified handicapped person in any aspect of church employment solely on the basis of handicap;

Makes facilities, programs, and activities accessible, usable, and open to qualified handicapped persons;

Provides appropriate access to all levels of service, including worship, academic, and counseling services and activities, to qualified handicapped persons;

Does not exclude any qualified handicapped person solely on the basis of handicap, participation in any church, education, or other program or activity;

Provides each qualified handicapped person with the same spiritual, health, welfare, and social services as are provided other persons.

Since this church may receive federal financial assistance, it complies with above requirements. The church holds the general view that:

Discrimination against a qualified handicapped person solely on the basis of handicap is unfair, wrong, and will not be tolerated;

To the extent reasonably possible, qualified handicapped persons should be in mainstream of life in a church community;

All parishioners may comment on concerns and suggest improvements for consideration.

Accordingly, St. Paul's Church makes every effort to comply with the requirements of the law and any regulations approved by the church, the vestry, or its clergy for ensuring a policy of nondiscrimination on the sole basis of handicap. The church authorizes the efforts under section 504 regulations in adhering to the regulations. The Parish Administrator is designated to disseminate 504 due process procedures to employees and post on bulletin boards and the website.

The designated St. Paul's Church Section 504 Coordinator is the Interim Rector,
St. Paul's Church
55 Main Street
North Kingstown, RI 02852
Church: (401) 294-4357
Home: (401) 295-5140

TO REPORT - Children and adults who need to report discrimination based on handicap or disability should contact the clergy, wardens, or church school staff. (See cover page)

Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect - Reporting Purpose

The concern of St. Paul's Church is for the welfare of the child. The purpose of this policy is to insure the greatest efficiency and consistency in referring suspected cases of child abuse and neglect to the State's child protective agency, The Department for Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF).

Duty to Report

The duty to report rests with any person who has reasonable cause to know or suspect that any child has been abused or neglected, i.e. teacher, aide, clergy, sexton, substitute, secretary, etc. Reasonable cause may result from any personal observation, admission, or response from a child or any communication from a person worthy of belief, which would suggest to a reasonable person that a child has been abused or neglected. The report must be made within twenty-four (24) hours to the DCYF or its agent. (Reports are taken at 1-800-RI-CHILD, twenty-four (24) hours per day, seven (7) days per week).

Immunity from Liability

Any person participating in good faith in making a report pursuant to the law shall have immunity from any liability, civil, or criminal, that might otherwise be incurred or imposed. Any such participant shall have the same immunity with respect to participation in any judicial proceeding resulting from such report.

Penalty for Failure to Report

Any person who knowingly fails to report or prevents any person acting reasonably from doing so shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be subject to a fine, imprisonment, or both.

Confidentiality of Reports and Records

All records concerning reports of child abuse and neglect, including reports made to the department shall be confidential. Information in the reports, including the name of the person who initiates the report, may be used only for purposes consistent with the investigation of abuse or neglect.

Procedure for Church Reporting Suspected Abuse

The Church develops and disseminates to all staff members and pertinent personnel the guidelines and procedures outlined in this policy with regard to the reporting of suspected abuse. Reporting may be done in conjunction with clergy, wardens, Sunday school staff, and youth leaders.

Sexual Harassment

I. Introduction

St. Paul's Church is committed to providing an environment that is free of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is completely unacceptable and will not be tolerated in any form at any level of the church.

It is also a violation of this policy to condone sexual harassment by another person. For purposes of this policy, to "condone" sexual harassment means to participate in such harassment by inciting, encouraging, fostering, or otherwise giving support or approval to that harassment whether by words or actions. Also prohibited is any retaliation against any other person because he/she complains of sexual harassment or assists in an investigation of a harassment complaint.

St. Paul's Church takes seriously all complaints of sexual harassment, the condoning of sexual harassment retaliation, or inaction in cases of suspected sexual harassment, and will have each complaint thoroughly, and promptly investigated.

II. Prohibitions

A. Sexual Harassment by Employees and Adults

- It is a violation of this policy for any clergy, teacher, and other employee, male or female, to sexually harass a child, another employee, or parishioner. For purposes of this prohibition, sexual harassment means any sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

B. Sexual Harassment by a Young Person

- Young people are prohibited from making unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favors and from engaging in any other verbal or physical conduct of sexual nature when those advances, requests or conduct have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with the welfare of another young person or the environment of any employee or parishioner by creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating, or sexually offensive atmosphere, worship or working environment.

When such advances, requests, or conduct have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with a child's activities, an employee's work performance, or anyone's participation in the life of the congregation by creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or sexually offensive educational or working environment, any condoning of the sexual harassment of an individual by another and any retaliation against a child or employee because he/she complains of sexual harassment or assists an investigation of such a complaint is also prohibited.

III. Examples

Whether particular language or conduct constitutes sexual harassment depends upon the circumstances of the incident and will be determined by the applicable church and/or the diocese on a case-by-case basis. The following are, however, some examples of language and conduct which all students and employees of the church are cautioned to avoid. This is not an exhaustive list.

- * Comments to or about any child or adult of his/her appearance that are sexually graphic or would otherwise tend to be degrading.
- * Touching or other forms of physical contact that is inappropriate.
- * Jokes or other remarks with sexual content that is graphic or may otherwise be offensive to others.
 - Sexually suggestive sounds or gestures.
- * Display of objects, posters, or pictures of a sexual nature.
- * A repetition of any words or conduct of a sexual nature after the person addressed has indicated that such words or conduct is unwelcome.

Sexual harassment does not refer to compliments or other behavior of a socially acceptable nature. It refers to language and conduct of a sexual nature that would be offensive to a reasonable person. Sexual harassment may be blatant or subtle; but whatever form it takes, verbal or physical, it is insulting and demeaning to the recipient and will not be tolerated.

IV. Complaints

If any child or employee believes that he/she has been subjected to sexual harassment, whether by a child, a church employee, or any other person who comes on church property with permission, or that he/she has witnessed the sexual harassment of another, the child, employee, or parishioner should report the incident promptly to the clergy, wardens, or any other adult with whom the child or employee feels comfortable.

A complaint of sexual harassment by a child, or by the parent on the child's behalf, may also be made to any clergy or warden. A clergy, warden, or other adult who receives such a complaint will notify the appropriate authority to initiate an investigation.

It is the policy of St. Paul's Church to have all complaints of sexual harassment promptly and fully investigated and to take any steps necessary to remedy the situation.

Normally, the investigation of a complaint of sexual harassment will be conducted by the clergy or wardens and will include separate private interviews with the complainant, each person accused of harassment, and each of the witnesses, if any. The interviewer conducting the investigation will ordinarily document the interview but those interviewed may also be asked to provide a written statement. All children and employees are expected to cooperate fully with any investigation of sexual harassment.

Information provided during an investigation of sexual harassment will be treated as confidential. This means that such information will be shared with others on a need-to-know basis only. The parent or guardian of a child complainant and those accused may be notified. In appropriate circumstances, as determined by the investigating authority, the accused may be informed of the identity of the complainant or witnesses, but, in those circumstances, the accused will be cautioned against reprisals or recrimination coercion of the complainant or witnesses.

At the conclusion of the investigation, the investigator will prepare a report, which will be shared with both the complainant, the person or persons accused of harassment, and the church authority. If the complainant or the accused is dissatisfied with the results of the investigation, either may discuss the issue directly with the church authority.

V. Disciplinary Action

A child found to have engaged in sexual harassment is subject to disciplinary sanctions including reporting to the local authorities.

An employee found to have engaged in sexual harassment is subject to disciplinary action, which may include termination of employment and reporting to the local authorities.

Any retaliation, discrimination, or other adverse action, such as intimidation, threats, or coercion, taken against a child or employee because he/she complains of sexual harassment or assists an investigation of harassment will also result in disciplinary sanctions, up to and including reporting to the local authorities in the case of a child, and including termination of employment and reporting to the local authorities, in the case of an employee.

Any child or employee found to have condoned sexual harassment by another may, depending upon the extent of his/her participation, be subject to disciplinary sanctions, up to and including the reporting to the local authorities, in the case of a child, or termination of employment and the reporting to local authorities, in the case of an employee.

Reports of sexual harassment will be heard by a committee of five people selected by the vestry, comprised of clergy, warden, vestry, and a professional therapist.

Anyone who is uncomfortable reporting sexual harassment to the parish authorities, or who believes that the parish has not dealt with a specific complaint satisfactorily, may take the complaint to the appropriate diocesan authorities.

How to Report

Names and telephone numbers of all persons designated to receive complaints at the parish and diocesan level will be posted clearly in all parish buildings. (see cover page)

Procedural Guidelines

Youth

The following guidelines apply:

Discipline

Meet with parents at the beginning of the school year to explain policies and expectations.
Refer dealing with problems to parents as soon as possible.
Take appropriate actions to assure the safety of all.
There is to be no use of corporal punishment.

One-on-one meetings.

Keep these at a minimum

If at times a young person needs to talk to you privately:

- try to keep the meeting visible to others, e.g. in a remote corner, in room with door ajar
- always have the young person seated nearest the door
- if possible, have one other adult in the vicinity.

Bathroom

If a child needs assistance, try to involve two adults, or take the children to the bathroom in a group.

If there is no choice and you have to assist a child right away, be quick about it, and get out of the bathroom as soon as possible.

Dealing with conflict

The basic principle is that people should deal with one another with respect- in meetings, activities, games, discussions, etc.

It is preferable to have problems dealt with in conjunction with parents.

If there is a physical altercation it needs to be broken up as quickly and nonviolently as possible.

When meetings are away from the church

Procure a permission form for every child, signed by a parent/guardian.

Use public transportation or a rented bus when possible and appropriate.

Procure from each driver a xerox of his/her driver's license and insurance certificate.

Safety and behavior expectations should be spelled out clearly and carefully in advance.

There should be an adequate number of male and female chaperones.

If the event is at someone's home, there must be more than one adult present.

At all church youth events, wherever they are, there shall be no alcohol, drugs, or any other illegal behavior.

The rules that apply at church apply at church-sponsored events away from the church.

Adult Activities

Respect should be shown by each individual for each individual.

Nobody has a right to dominate a discussion or activity to the exclusion of others, and everybody has a right to be heard.

As much as possible, all church activities should be available to older parishioners, and it should be made easy for them to participate. Availability of bathrooms, ease of access, and quality of lighting are important considerations.

Whenever alcohol is served at an activity, there should be a non-alcohol alternative, served in an equally appealing manner. Nobody should be permitted to overindulge, or to drive if they have had too much to drink.

Outside groups using St. Paul's and serving alcohol need to provide written assurance that they have insurance coverage in the event of an alcohol-related mishap.

Personnel and Volunteers

Members of the parish staff undergo a background check in accordance with state regulations before they are hired.

Volunteers working with children and/or in situations in which others may be vulnerable, complete a volunteer information form, and in some instances a background check according to state regulations. These precautions are taken for the safety of all.

Pastoral Care/Counseling

To preserve the primacy of the pastoral relationship with all members of the church clergy are expected to facilitate (in keeping with national church standards), as needed, appropriate and timely referrals to professional counselors within the three session, per person limit.

Should a pastoral consultation indicate that counseling is in order, it is understood that a referral would take place within three sessions. Nobody, clergy or lay, should offer counseling above his/her level of expertise, training, and/or licensure.

The Safe Church Policy was approved by the Vestry on January 11, 2005.

The Safe Church Policy was updated and approved by the Vestry on May 19, 2009.

Cover information was updated on August 16, 2010.

This draft revision distributed to the Vestry Nov 13, 2010 to amend the following appearing in a proposed revised form on this page:

The Safe Church Policy was updated and approved by the Vestry on November 13, 2010.

Contact names and phone numbers updated August 12, 2011