

**St. Mark's Anglican Church**  
**Child and Youth Protection Policy**  
*Adopted by the Vestry August 18, 2024*

**PREAMBLE**

St. Mark's Anglican Church, Moultrie, Georgia seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children and youth who participate in our programs and activities. By implementing the below practices, our intention is to protect the children and youth of St. Mark's from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff and volunteers from false accusations. Most especially, we seek to serve our children and youth in such a way that we might fulfill Jesus' admonition:

*If anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.*

Matthew 18:6

**DEFINITIONS**

1. For purposes of this policy, the terms "Child" or "Children" include all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years.
2. A "Full-Time Worker" is someone who routinely works with children bi-weekly or more frequently.
3. A "Part-Time Worker" is someone who works with children on non-routine or infrequent basis as either a volunteer or by-necessity contract employee.

**DOCTRINAL POLICY**

*Not many of you should become teachers, my brethren, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. – James 3:1*

Teaching children is of the utmost gravity as it pertains to the eternal hope of those who are most vulnerable and impressionable. Therefore, all full-time workers will ensure that the foundation of their teaching is the plain sense of the Holy Scriptures as understood by the traditional interpretation of the Church. Moreover, they will conform all of their teaching to the doctrine, discipline, and worship of Christ as expressed in the Creeds, Councils, and Canons of the Church (Appendix 3). Finally, as the primary personal exemplars of ministry in the church for our children, all full-time workers will order their own personal lives – by the grace of God and to the best of their ability – in conformity with Canon 1.10 of the Anglican Church in North America: The Duties of the Laity (Appendix 4).

**TWO ADULT RULE**

It is our intention that a minimum of two unrelated adult workers will be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during our programs and activities. Some youth classes may have only one adult teacher in attendance during the class session; in these instances, either there must be a window in the door or the door will remain open and there should be no fewer than three students with the adult teacher – doors will never be locked while persons are inside the room.

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We do not allow minors to be alone with one unrelated adult on our premises or in any sponsored activity unless in a counseling situation. There should never be an instance when only one adult is alone in the building with any children or youth as part of an official St. Mark's program.

**MEDICATIONS POLICY**

It is the policy of St. Mark's employees and child care workers not to administer either prescription or non-prescription medications to the children under our care. Medications should be administered by a parent at home. Exceptions to the medications policy may be granted to parents of children with potentially life-threatening conditions (such as asthma or severe allergic reactions). Parents of such children should address their situation with a church staff member to develop a plan of action, which must include signed and dated authorization from the parents to allow the specific medication administration (Appendix 2).

**DISCIPLINE POLICY**

It is the policy of St. Mark's employees and child care workers not to administer corporal punishment in the auspices of their involvement at St. Mark's, even if parents have suggested or given permission for it. There should be no spanking, grabbing, hitting, or other physical discipline of children. Workers should consult with a church staff member if assistance is needed with disciplinary issues. Children who refuse or cannot be respectfully disciplined by workers will be turned over to their parents. If this issue occurs a third time, the parents of the child must attend all programs until the issue is resolved.

**RESTROOM GUIDELINES**

Workers will escort children to bathrooms outside of the program area; they will check the bathroom first to make sure that the bathroom is empty, then allow the children inside. and then remain outside of bathroom. If a child is taking longer than seems necessary, the worker should open the bathroom door and call the child's name. If a child requires assistance, the workers should prop open the bathroom door and leave the stall door open as he/she assists the child. For children over the age of five, at least one adult male should take boys to the restroom and at least one adult female should take girls. For the protection of all, workers should never be alone with a child in a bathroom with the door closed and never be in a closed bathroom stall with a child. Parents are strongly encouraged to have their children visit the bathroom prior to each class or program.

**ACCIDENTAL INJURIES TO CHILDREN**

In the event that a child or youth is injured while under our care, the following steps should be followed:

1. For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, workers will provide First Aid (BandAids, etc.) as appropriate and will notify the child's parent or guardian of the injury at the time the child is picked up from our care.

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2. For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid, the parent and/or guardian will immediately be summoned in addition to the worker's supervisor. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called.
3. Once the child has received appropriate medical attention, an incident report will be completed in the case of injuries requiring treatment by a medical professional.

## **TRAINING**

St. Mark's will provide training on this child protection policy to all new childcare workers and will have a refresher training annually for all workers to coincide with the beginning of Michaelmas term. It is advised that all workers be trained and proficient in CPR/First Aid.

All Full-Time childcare workers (employee, contract, or volunteer) will complete Ministry Safe™ training or an approved alternative on a tri-annual basis with paperwork being checked at the beginning of Michaelmas term.

## **SELECTION OF WORKERS**

All employees and all persons who desire to work with children who participate in programs and activities at St. Mark's will be screened. This screening includes the following:

1. **Six Month Rule:** No volunteer will be considered for any position involving contact with minors until s/he has been involved with Church for a minimum of six (6) months. (This time of interaction between our leadership and the applicant allows for better evaluation and suitability of the applicant for working with children).
2. **Written Application:** All persons seeking to work with children must complete and sign a written application provided as an appendix to this policy. The application form will be maintained in confidence on file at the church.
3. **Personal Interview:** Upon completion of the application, a face-to-face interview will be scheduled with all full-time workers to discuss his/her suitability for the position if the position is for.
4. **Reference Checks:** Before a full-time worker or a part-time contract worker from outside the church is permitted to work with children, at least two of the applicants' references will be checked. Documentation of the reference checks will be maintained in confidence on file at the church. Part-time workers who are members of the church, must provide references and they will be consulted on an as-needed basis.
5. **Criminal Background Check:** Each prospective volunteer will give written consent for a criminal background check, conducted by the company or agency the Church selects. The form of authorization will be that prescribed by the company or agency selected. The church will employ no volunteer without this authorization. Upon receiving the requested information and performing the actual background checks, the church will destroy the information within 10 working days for the privacy protection of the volunteer.

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6. **Existing Workers:** St. Mark's reserves the right to waive this process for workers who have been in place in this church for an extended period of time prior to the adoption of these policies. However, all workers must comply with safety training, background check, and acknowledgment of principles.
7. **Grounds for Disqualification:** The following offenses are grounds for disqualification regardless of any extenuating circumstances:
  - a. Crimes against the family, sex related offenses, child related offenses, murder, felony theft/robbery/burglary offenses, fraud related offenses and crimes against persons and property.
  - b. A felony or misdemeanor classified as an offense against public order or indecency.
  - c. A felony violation of any law intended to control the possession or distribution of any controlled substances.
  - d. All other offenses, not otherwise described above, may result in disqualification at the discretion of an agent of the church.

### **TEENAGE WORKERS**

We recognize that there may be times when it is necessary or desirable for babysitters (paid or volunteer) who are themselves under age 18 to assist in caring for children during programs or activities. The following guidelines apply to such workers:

- Teenage workers must be at least age 14.
- Teenage workers will be screened as specified above.
- Teenage workers must be under the supervision of an adult (at least age 21) and must never be left alone with children.

### **RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE**

For purposes of this policy, "child abuse" is any action (or lack of action) which endangers or harms a child's physical, psychological or emotional health and development. Child abuse occurs in different ways and includes the following:

- Physical abuse – any physical injury to a child which is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burns, and biting.
- Emotional abuse – emotional injury when the child is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling and persistent teasing.
- Sexual abuse – any sexual activity between a child and an adult or between a child and another child at least four years older than the victim, including activities such as fondling, exhibitionism, intercourse, incest, and pornography.

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- Neglect – depriving a child of their essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care.

Childcare workers may have the opportunity to become aware of abuse or neglect of the children under our care. In the event that an individual involved in the care of children at this church becomes aware of suspected abuse or neglect of a child under his/her care, this should be reported immediately to a church staff member for further action including reporting to authorities as may be mandated by state law.

**REPORTING PROCESS**

In the event that an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred at this church or during our sponsored programs or activities, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. The Rector or Church Wardens will be notified.
2. The person making the complaint reports to the appropriate law enforcement officials after informing the Rector or Church Wardens
3. The Rector or Church Wardens will immediately contact the Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of the South. The Canon to the Ordinary of the Anglican Diocese of the South will then serve as in-take officer and consult with the Diocesan Chancellor.
4. The Bishop's Office will contact local authorities as mandated by local State Law.
5. The worker alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be placed on leave from working with children pending an investigation.
6. The Bishop, after consulting with the Diocesan Chancellor, will comply with the reporting and notification requirements as contained in the diocesan, parish, or other liability policies for insurance claims. In the event there is no investigation of the incident by state or local authorities, a team will be formed to investigate the circumstances of the incident. The team should act only in consultation with the ADOTS Bishop's Office and/or Diocesan Chancellor.
7. A pastoral visit will be arranged for those who desire it. The Bishop or anyone who may subsequently be involved in the process will not at any time following the first receipt of the complaint hear the sacramental confession of any of the persons involved.

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**APPENDIX ONE**

**Application to Serve with Children at St. Mark's Anglican Church**

Today's Date \_\_\_\_\_

Full Legal Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Time actively attending St. Mark's \_\_\_\_\_ (If not applicable, indicate your association with St. Mark's below):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

List all previous positions with children (paid or volunteer / secular or ecclesiastical):

1. \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide a reference name and phone number:

\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide a reference name and phone number:

\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide a reference name and phone number:

\_\_\_\_\_

\*Additional information can be added on the back of the form if needed.

\*\* References must be of a professional, and not familial nature.

List all previous church affiliations from the previous 7 years:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

List all current and previous employers from the previous 7 years:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

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Please provide a reference name and phone number:

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2. \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide a reference name and phone number:

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3. \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide a reference name and phone number:

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\*Additional information can be added on the back of the form if needed.

\*\* References must be of a professional, and not familial nature.

All applicants must be willing to submit to a local law enforcement agency background check.  
Do you wish to disclose any previous criminal convictions?

(If yes, please see the Rector or Sr. Warden directly).

\*All information of disclosures or background checks will be destroyed within ten days of processing applications.

**SIGNATURES**

1. I acknowledge that all the information provided above is both true, and reflects my desire that the full truth be known:

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2. I acknowledge that by signing this form I consent to a background check:

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3. I acknowledge that I will conform all of my teaching to the doctrine of the church and my life to the canons of the church:

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**APPENDIX TWO**

**Medication Authorization Form**

I (full name) \_\_\_\_\_  
authorize the childcare workers at St. Mark's on (date) \_\_\_\_\_ to provide to my child  
(child's name) \_\_\_\_\_ the provided medication: (name of medication)  
\_\_\_\_\_ for this specific ailment (name issue) \_\_\_\_\_  
under these circumstances (as applicable) \_\_\_\_\_.

The dosage information and schedule is as follows:

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I will not hold St. Mark's or the workers assigned liable for any non-malevolent issues involved with the administration of this medication.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



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**APPENDIX THREE**

**The Doctrine of the Church**

The Anglican Church in North America, being a part of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church of Christ, believes and confesses Jesus Christ to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no one comes to the Father but by Him. Therefore, the following seven elements are characteristic of the Anglican Way, and essential for membership:

1. We confess the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired Word of God, containing all things necessary for salvation, and to be the final authority and unchangeable standard for Christian faith and life.
2. We confess Baptism and the Supper of the Lord to be Sacraments ordained by Christ Himself in the Gospel, and thus to be ministered with unfailing use of His words of institution and of the elements ordained by Him.
3. We confess the godly historic Episcopate as an inherent part of the apostolic faith and practice, and therefore as integral to the fullness and unity of the Body of Christ.
4. We confess as proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture the historic faith of the undivided church as declared in the three Catholic Creeds: the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian.
5. Concerning the seven Councils of the undivided Church, we affirm the teaching of the first four Councils and the Christo-logical clarifications of the fifth, sixth and seventh Councils, in so far as they are agreeable to the Holy Scriptures.
6. We receive The Book of Common Prayer as set forth by the Church of England in 1662, together with the Ordinal attached to the same, as a standard for Anglican doctrine and discipline, and, with the Books which preceded it, as the standard for the Anglican tradition of worship.
7. We receive the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion of 1571, taken in their literal and grammatical sense, as expressing the Anglican response to certain doctrinal issues controverted at that time, and as expressing fundamental principles of authentic Anglican belief.

In all these things, the Anglican Church in North America is determined by the help of God to hold and maintain, as the Anglican Way has received them, the doctrine, discipline and worship of Christ and to transmit the same, unimpaired, to our posterity. We seek to be and remain in full communion with all Anglican Churches, Dioceses and Provinces that hold and maintain the Historic Faith, Doctrine, Sacraments and Discipline of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.

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**APPENDIX FOUR**

**The Duties of the Laity**

*Canon I.10 of the Anglican Church in North America*

The people of God are the chief agents of the Mission of the Church to extend the Kingdom of God by so presenting Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit that people everywhere will come to put their trust in God through Him, know Him as Savior and serve Him as Lord in the fellowship of the Church. The effective ministry of the Church is the responsibility of the laity no less than it is the responsibility of Bishops and other Clergy. It is incumbent for every lay member of the Church to become an effective minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ, one who is spiritually qualified, gifted, called, and mature in the faith.

With the help of God's grace, it shall be the duty of every member of the church:

- a. To worship God, the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit, every Lord's Day [Sunday] in a Church unless reasonably prevented;
- b. To engage regularly in the reading and study of Holy Scripture and the Doctrine of the Church as found in Article I of the Constitution of this Church;
- c. To pray regularly for their needs and those of others, for the Church and its mission, and for the concerns of the world;
- d. To observe their baptismal vows, to lead an upright and sober life, and not give scandal to the Church;
- e. To present their children and those they have led to the Lord for baptism and confirmation;
- f. To give regular financial support to the Church, with the biblical tithe as the minimum standard of giving;
- g. To practice forgiveness daily according to our Lord's teaching;
- h. To receive worthily the Sacrament of Holy Communion as often as reasonable;
- i. To observe the feasts and fasts of the Church set forth in the Anglican formularies;
- j. To affirm and follow the biblical standards of sexual morality and ethics in Canon II.8;<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Canon II.8 of the Anglican Church in North America:

- Clergy and lay leaders of this Church are called to be exemplary in all spheres of morality as a condition of being appointed or remaining in office.
- In view of the teaching of Holy Scripture, the Lambeth Conference of 1998 and the Jerusalem Declaration, this Church upholds faithfulness in marriage between a man and a woman in lifelong union, and believes that abstinence is right for those who are not called to marriage, and cannot legitimize or bless same sex unions or ordain persons who engage in homosexual behavior. Sexual intercourse should take place only between a man and a woman who are married to each other.
- God, and not man, is the creator of human life. The unjustified taking of life is sinful. Therefore, all members and clergy are called to promote and respect the sanctity of every human life from conception to natural death.
- The Church is called upon to show Christ-like compassion to those who have fallen into sin, encouraging them to repent and receive forgiveness, and offering the ministry of healing to all who suffer physically or emotionally as a result of such sin.

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- k. To continue their instruction in the Faith so as to remain an effective minister for the Lord Jesus Christ;
- l. To serve their neighbor, sacrificially demonstrating the love of Christ to the poor, the sick and those in need.
- m. To devote themselves to the ministry of Christ and the proclamation of the Gospel among those who do not know Him, utilizing the gifts that the Holy Spirit gives them, for the effective extension of Christ's Kingdom.