



Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse

**Church of the Holy Paraclete
Providence, RI
www.HolyParaclete.org**

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Summary

Purpose

These policies are to establish and maintain safe and loving communities for children and youth that are free from emotional, physical, and sexual abuse.

Definitions

- *Church personnel:* Clergy, staff, contract workers, and volunteers.
- *Children:* A child is anyone under the age of 12
- *Youth:* A youth is anyone age 12 but not yet 18, and/or who is still in high school
- *Personnel who REGULARLY work around children or youth:* Clergy; paid or volunteer church personnel whose work takes them throughout the facility or grounds; all persons who supervise children or youth; church school teachers; people who regularly provide transportation; all parish council members & children and youth commissions.
- *Personnel who OCCASIONALLY work with youth:* All persons who occasionally supervise or assist with the supervision of children and youth or provide transportation; all persons who assist or supervise the nursery less than four times per year; all adults who participate in overnight activities with children or youth twice a year or less.
- *Abuse:* Intentional emotional, physical or sexual injury inflicted upon a child or youth.
- *Neglect:* The failure to provide basic needs for a child or youth or the failure to protect a child or youth from harm.
- *Code of Conduct:* A uniform set of agreements adopted by the Church of the Holy Paraclete to create safe environments for children and youth and for those who minister to them.

Guidelines

Church personnel agree to do all in their power to prevent abuse and neglect. All church personnel must agree to comply with the Church of the Holy Paraclete's Guidelines for Appropriate Affection. (Appendix A). Church personnel will respond to children and youth with respect, consideration and equal treatment, regardless of sex, race, religion, sexual orientation, culture, or socioeconomic status. Church personnel will maintain an attitude of respect, patience and maturity. Also, church personnel agree to report any observed inappropriate behaviors or suspected abuse to church authorities such as the Pastor, Vicar, cleric or Diocesan Bishop.

Screening

The selection of personnel who work with children and youth involves completing a standard application, background checks involving criminal, sexual offender registries, and motor vehicle checks, as well as a face to face interview and reference checks.

Education and Training Requirements

All personnel who regularly work with children or youth are required to complete three hours of child abuse prevention and training as approved by the North American Old Catholic Church. Personnel who occasionally work with children are required to complete a one hour training session.

Monitoring

Involves structural guidelines and standards for the programs and activities for children and youth, which includes clear approval steps for establishing new programs, proper adult ratios with children and youth and the overseeing of appropriate interactions with children and youth.

Introduction

The Church of the Holy Paraclete's policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse define behaviors and practices that allow members and participants in the life of our church to fully demonstrate love and compassion for children and youth in sincere and genuine relationships.

We recognize that relationships are the foundation of Christian ministry and that community is central to the life of the church. Relationships in ministry should always be experienced as caring and without intention to do harm or allow harm to occur. With this in mind, the Church of the Holy Paraclete is committed to providing safe places for children and youth to grow in their life in Christ. The following policies and codes of conduct have been adopted by the Church of the Holy Paraclete to create and maintain healthy environments for children and youth and for those who minister to them. All Church Personnel agree to adhere to the Codes of Conduct and the following Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse.

Types of Abuse

1. Physical abuse is non-accidental injury, which is intentionally inflicted upon a child 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, which is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of the adult, child or youth.
3. Sexual abuse perpetrated by another child or youth is any contact or activity of a sexual nature that occurs between a child or youth and another child or youth 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 which 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 an observable and 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, exploitation, or wrongful temporary or permanent use of a child or youth's belongings or money or time.

Code of Conduct for Protection of Children and Youth

Relationships among people are at the heart 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 the Church of the Holy Paraclete to help 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 sign the Compliance Agreement Form. The Compliance Agreement formally states that church personnel received a copy of the policies, read and understood its contents and agree to adhere to the policies, guidelines and Code of Conduct.

- 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 to not 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.
- 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.
- All Church Personnel acknowledge their obligation and responsibility to protect children and youth and agree to report known or suspected abuse of children or youth 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 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 a parish, camp, school or preschool.
 3. Those who contract their services to a church, camp, school or preschool.
 4. 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, Children's Church

School Teachers, Youth Leaders/Teachers, Acolyte leaders and children and youth choir directors, and parent volunteers who assist more than three times a year.

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. CHURCH PERSONNEL WHO REGULARLY WORK WITH OR AROUND CHILDREN OR YOUTH (For the purpose of this policy, the following are included in the definition):

1. All clergy whether stipendiary, non-stipendiary, or otherwise who are engaged in ministry or service to the church.
2. All paid or volunteer Church Personnel whose work regularly takes them throughout the facility or grounds.
3. All persons who teach, supervise or assist with supervising children or youth in ministries, programs or activities more often than occasionally.
4. All persons who provide transportation to children or youth without other adults in the vehicle more often than occasionally.
5. All parish council members or members of similar decision-making groups who have the authority to approve the creation of ministries, programs or activities for children or youth.

Examples of Church Personnel who REGULARLY WORK WITH OR AROUND CHILDREN OR YOUTH: include, but are not limited to:

- Church School teachers
- Children's or youth choir directors
- Musicians who work with children or youth
- Lay youth ministers
- Volunteer youth directors
- All Church Personnel who work or assist 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
- Adults who participate in overnight activities with children or youth more than twice a year
- Preschool Teachers
- Youth Director

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- Confirmation Mentors
 - Youth Mentors
 - Acolyte directors or leaders
 - All staff, whether volunteer or paid, at church camps

D. For the purpose of this policy, the following are included in the definition of Church Personnel who OCCASIONALLY WORK WITH OR AROUND CHILDREN OR YOUTH:

1. All persons who supervise or assist with supervising children 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, or teaching one “unit” of Church School for a month).
2. All persons who provide transportation for children or youth without other adults in the vehicle infrequently, generally about four times a year.
3. All persons who work or assist in the nursery or preschool, three or four times a year. Adults who participate in overnight activities with children or youth once or twice a year.

Safeguarding Children and Youth

Screening and Selection

1. Any and all Church Personnel who regularly work with or around children or youth are screened and selected utilizing at least the following:
 - a. A standard application completed by the applicant that includes a) an authorization for the release of information to conduct background checks and b) the CODE OF CONDUCT.
 - b. A 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. (Optional for Sunday School teachers).
 - c. A Sexual Offender Registry check in any state where the applicant has resided during the past seven (7) years.
 - d. An individual interview with the applicant.
 - e. Reference checks of 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 or youth.
2. Any and all Church Personnel who occasionally work or around children or youth are screened and selected utilizing at least the following:
 - a. A standard application completed by the applicant that includes a) an acknowledgment for the release of information to conduct background checks and b) the CODE OF CONDUCT .

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- b. A Sexual Offender Registry check in any state where the applicant has resided during the past seven (7) years.
 - c. An individual interview with the applicant.
 - d. At least one reference check of a person or persons outside the congregation who know the applicant, preferably who knows how the applicant interacts with children.
 - e. Driving or Motor Vehicle Records check (if the person will be transporting children or youth).
3. All information gathered about an applicant is 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 or youth.
 4. Church Personnel who work with or around children or youth have a personnel file that is kept where other church records are kept.
 5. Criminal records checks and sexual offender registry checks are conducted every five (5) years for Church Personnel who Regularly Work With or Around Children or Youth. (Criminal records checks are optional for Sunday School teachers.)
 6. To the extent possible, it is recommended that persons not be permitted to supervise an immediate family member when working with or around children or youth (for instance a nursery director supervising her 16-year-old daughter assisting in the nursery). For the purpose of this policy, immediate family member is defined as spouse, partner, child, parent, sister, brother, similar in-law relationship, stepchild, stepparent, step sibling, grandparent, or cohabitant.
 7. Church Personnel who transfer within the Diocese of Atlanta and apply for or are asked to or who do undertake a position working with or around children or youth are required to undergo the same screening and selection process in Section A above.

Education and Training Requirements

1. Completion of the Safeguarding God's Children training program of child abuse prevention education and training as approved by the North American Old Catholic Church is required for all church personnel who regularly work with or around children and youth before they start their work with children or youth.
2. All members of the clergy and members of any supervisory group over the children and/or youth in the parish will either provide evidence of current training certification in Safeguarding God's Children or completion of the Safeguarding Online course or will have completed the Safeguarding God's Children course within the three months of service.
3. One hour of child abuse awareness education and training, which includes the Abuse Risk Management for Volunteers module of Safeguarding Online, is required for all church personnel who occasionally work with or around children or youth, before they start their work with children or youth.
4. Church Personnel who are responsible for screening, selection and supervision of others in programs for children and youth are required to complete an additional three (3) hours of specialized education and training in screening, selection and monitoring every two years.

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5. To maintain certification, church personnel will complete updated child abuse prevention training or education in related fields every three years. All personnel will review the Code of Conduct & Guidelines for Appropriate Affection annually.
 6. The person responsible for children and youth ministries or a person appointed by the pastor or the parish council in each parish shall audit the certification files annually so that current certification be maintained.

Monitoring and Supervision of Programs

The monitoring and supervision of programs and activities involving children 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 other 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 or youth in and of themselves. Examples include providing alcohol or drugs to children or youth or actually having sexual contact with a child or youth. 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 or youth to "groom" them or their parents for eventual abuse or which provide the privacy child molesters need in order to abuse children or youth. Examples of those behaviors and interactions include holding children over the age of three on the lap or transporting a child or youth alone.

The structural guidelines and standards are covered in both the Monitoring and Supervision section and in the section, General Conduct for the Protection of Children and Youth. The behaviors and interactions of persons with children and youth that need to be monitored and supervised are covered in the section titled General Conduct for the Protection of Children and Youth and in the Guidelines for Appropriate Affection (Appendix A).

Structural Guidelines & Standards

1. Programs for children and youth have established ratios for adults and children.
2. Church Personnel are not alone with a child or youth or multiple children or youth where other adults cannot easily observe them.
3. Church Personnel over the age of 21 directly supervise Church Personnel under the age of 18 and are physically present during all activities.
4. An up to date list of approved congregation-sponsored programs for children and youth is maintained in the church office or other place where church records are kept.
5. Any new activities developed by Church Personnel for children or youth which take place at a location other than the church or when parents are not present, must be approved by the Pastor. Requests to develop new activities should be submitted in writing to the Pastor, Youth Leaders and appropriate Ministry teams. The pastor, etc. considers whether the plan for a new activity is appropriate and includes adequate adult supervision.

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6. Each program develops age-appropriate procedures to ensure the safety of children and youth using rest rooms and showers or baths.
 7. When supervising or assisting private activities such as dressing, showering or diapering infants or children, Church Personnel remain in an area observable by other adults or work in pairs.
 8. When at all possible, it is recommended that at least two unrelated Church Personnel supervise activities; on overnight trips, male and female adult supervision is mandatory with boys and girls in attendance.]
 9. Parish computers should have adequate password protection.
 10. Parish computer use will have adequate supervision (by parish staff or authorized persons) of anyone using a parish computer to access the Internet. Be advised that any activity on a parish computer is not considered private and may be accessed by authorized persons.
 11. The parish will conduct a “safe church audit” annually to review practices and policies within the congregation..

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 youth to identify and stop those that may be inherently harmful to children or youth, that 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 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, the exception is reported to the supervisor of the church personnel making the exception as soon as possible.

1. All Church Personnel who work with children or youth must agree to comply with the Church of the Holy Paraclete Guidelines for Appropriate Affection (Appendix A) and have completed and signed the Compliance Agreement Form (Appendix C).
2. No person is allowed to volunteer to REGULARLY WORK WITH CHILDREN OR YOUTH until the person has been known to the clergy and congregation for at least six months. The Pastor has the right to refuse any person from working with children and youth.
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 or youth.
5. Parents or guardians complete written permission forms before Church Personnel transport children and youth for a church sponsored activity or for any purpose on more than an occasional basis.
6. Church Personnel respond to children and youth with respect, consideration and equal treatment, regardless of sex, race, religion, sexual orientation, culture or socioeconomic status. Church Personnel portray a positive role model for children and youth by maintaining an attitude of respect, patience, and maturity. They avoid even the appearance of favoritism.

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7. One-to-one counseling with children or youth is 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, cards, videos, films, clothing etc.) on church property or in the presence of children or youth except as expressly permitted as part of a preauthorized 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. It is acceptable to have multiple adults sleep with all the children 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.
 15. Church Personnel are prohibited from using physical punishment in any way for behavior management of children and 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 individual or to a child, youth or others.
 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.
 18. All personnel should be vigilant so that questionable situations do not arise.

Responding to Problems

Reporting inappropriate behaviors or policy violations with Children or Youth

When Church Personnel observe any inappropriate behaviors, behaviors that are inconsistent with the Guidelines for Appropriate Affection, or which may violate any provision of these Policies for Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse, they must immediately report their observations. Examples of inappropriate behaviors or policy violations would be seeking private time with children or youth, taking children or youth on overnight trips without other adults, swearing or making suggestive comments to children or youth, or selecting or using staff or volunteers without the required screening.

Such inappropriate behaviors or possible policy violations that relate to interactions with children or youth should be reported in one of the following ways:

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- a. A telephone call or meeting with the immediate supervisor of the person,
 - b. A telephone call or meeting with the pastor, if the person is not the pastor;
 - c. A telephone call or meeting with a church's head of the parish council if the person is the pastor;
 - d. A telephone call, meeting, or fax to the bishop;
 - e. Submit a NOTICE OF CONCERN (Appendix B), signed or unsigned, to the bishop;
 - f. If the action is illegal, contact the proper legal authorities.

All reports of inappropriate behavior or policy violations with children or youth will be taken seriously.

Reporting Suspected Abuse of Children or Youth

1. All Church Personnel are required by this policy to report known or suspected abuse of children or youth to the appropriate state authorities.
2. Failure to report suspected abuse of children or youth may be a crime. Reports may be made confidentially or anonymously. 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.
3. In addition to reporting to the state authorities, Church Personnel are required to report any reasonably suspected or known abuse of children or youth that may have been perpetrated by Church Personnel directly to the Pastor, priest in charge, or head of the parish council so that immediate and proper steps may be taken to ensure the safety of alleged victims.
4. Reports of suspected or known abuse that involve Church Personnel may be reported in the following ways:
 - a. A telephone call, meeting or fax to the bishop or Canon to the Ordinary;
 - b. A telephone call or meeting with the pastor if the pastor is not the person suspected of abuse.
 - c. Submit a Notice of concern (Appendix B), signed or unsigned, to the bishop.
5. The Church of the Holy Paraclete 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 North American Old Catholic Church.

Appendix A: Guidelines for Appropriate Affection

The Church of the Holy Paraclete is 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 or youth. These Guidelines are based, in large part, on avoiding behaviors known to be used by child molesters to groom children 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 or youth.

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 youth.

Examples of positive and appropriate forms of affection:

- Brief hugs.
- Pats on the shoulder or back.
- Handshakes.
- "High-fives" and hand slapping.
- Verbal praise.
- Touching hands, faces, shoulders and arms of children 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).

Examples of inappropriate forms of affection to use with children and youth in ministry settings because many of them are the behaviors that child molesters use to groom children 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 or youth
- Touching knees or legs of children or youth.
- Wrestling with children or youth.
- Tickling children 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 or youth.
- Private meals with individual children or youth.

Appendix B: Confidential Notice of Concern

Individual(s) of Concern: _____

Date of occurrence: _____

Time of occurrence: _____

Type of Concern:

Inappropriate behavior with a child or youth

Policy violation with a child or youth

Possible risk of abuse

Other concern: _____

Describe the situation:

What happened?

Where it happened?

When it happened?

Who was involved?

Who was present?

Who was notified?

If reported to the State, what was their recommendation about investigating? Attach additional sheets if needed.

Has this situation ever occurred previously? Attach additional sheets if needed.

What action was taken? How was the situation handled, who was involved, who was questioned, were police called? Attach additional sheets if needed.

What is the follow-up plan? Does anyone else need to be notified? Will the situation need monitoring? Would you like someone to call you to discuss this situation? Attach additional sheets if needed.

Submitted by: (Please print)

Telephone number:

Location and address:

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Reviewed by:

Inappropriate behaviors or possible policy violations that relate to interactions with children or youth should be reported in one of the following ways:

- a. A telephone call or meeting with the immediate supervisor of the person,
- b. A telephone call or meeting with the pastor, if the person is not the pastor
- c. A telephone call or meeting with a church's head of the parish council if the person is the pastor;
- d. A telephone call, meeting with the bishop.

Please give this form to the appropriate supervisor or clergy person.

Appendix C: Compliance Agreement Form

Name (print): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Compliance Statement

I certify that:

- I have received and read the Church of the Holy Paraclete's Policies on the Prevention of Abuse for Children and Youth.
- I understand its contents.
- I fully understand my responsibility to comply with the Policies and Code of Conduct.
- I understand my responsibility to report any violations or potential violations of the conduct to church authorities.
- I recognize that any violation of the Code of Conduct may be grounds for dismissal from employment or may terminate my right to volunteer to work with children or youth.

Signature: _____

Date: _____