

1 SAINT PETER'S CHURCH

2 SAFE CHURCH POLICY

3

4 Saint Peter's Church Policies and Procedures

5 for Creating a Safe Church Community

6

7

8 **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

9

10 The policies and procedures that follow apply to all activities that take place within the  
11 building and property of Saint Peter's Church as well as to programs and events  
12 scheduled as part of the ministry of this Church that take place elsewhere. These  
13 policies and procedures apply to all members, friends, volunteers, and/or employees of  
14 this Church, and are put forth for all members, friends, volunteers, and/or employees of  
15 Saint Peter's Church to follow so as to assure appropriate care for the children, youth  
16 and adults of the Church.

17

18 As a community of Christian faith and in keeping with the mission of Saint Peter's  
19 Church, Saint Peter's Church is committed to creating and maintaining programs,  
20 facilities and a community in which members, friends, volunteers, and/or employees can  
21 worship, learn and/or work together in an atmosphere free from all forms of  
22 discrimination, harassment, exploitation or intimidation. All persons associated with  
23 Saint Peter's Church should be aware that the Church is strongly opposed to Sexual

24 Exploitation and Sexual Harassment (as defined below) and that such behavior is  
25 prohibited. It is the intention of this Church to take action in, and to attempt to prevent  
26 and correct behavior that is contrary to this policy and, as necessary, to discipline those  
27 persons who violate this policy.

28

29 In addition to the policies outlined in this document, employees of Saint Peter's Church  
30 are expected to abide by the policies and procedures as outlined in the Employee  
31 Handbook and Policies and Procedures Manual.

32

33

## 34 **2.0 MINISTERIAL CONDUCT**

35

36 Consistent with our understanding of the priesthood of all believers, all rostered leaders,  
37 those preparing to be rostered leaders, employees, elected and appointed lay leaders,  
38 and authorized volunteers are Ministers to the congregation.

39

40 It is important that every Minister to the church be adequately prepared and educated  
41 for the ministry in which they serve others, and to understand the ways in which their  
42 use or misuse of authority may impact others.

43

44 It is the policy of Saint Peter's Church to encourage its Ministers to nurture safety within  
45 Ministerial Relationships by being attentive to self-care, education, maintaining

46 appropriate boundaries, and the importance of referring those in need to supportive and  
47 helpful resources.

48

## 49 2.1 STANDARD OF BEHAVIOR

50 Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Harassment are unethical behavior contrary to the  
51 teachings of Christ and the Church and will not be tolerated within this congregation.

52

53

## 54 **3.0 FORMATION AND MANDATE OF THE SAFE CHURCH COMMITTEE**

55

### 56 3.1 PURPOSE OF THE SAFE CHURCH COMMITTEE

57 The Saint Peter's Church Safe Church Committee is responsible for ensuring that all  
58 members, employees, volunteers, and outside organizations utilizing the Church facility  
59 are instructed to follow the practices and guidelines of the Saint Peter's Safe Church  
60 Policy.

61

### 62 3.2 COMMITTEE COMPOSITION, MEMBERSHIP TERMS AND MEETING

#### 63 FREQUENCY

64 The Saint Peter's Church Safe Church Committee shall have at least 5 members

65 including:

- 66 • The Senior Pastor or his/her designee from the pastoral staff
- 67 • The Parish Council President or Vice-President
- 68 • A Parish Council appointee

- 69 • Two members-at-large from the congregation, one of whom shall serve as Chair  
70 of the committee and as the church's Safe Church Advocate.
- 71 • The members shall be recommended by the Executive Committee and elected  
72 by the Parish Council at its November meeting.

73

#### 74 3.2.1 ELECTION OF MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

75 Upon formation of the committee, one member-at-large shall be elected to a term of two  
76 years, and the other member-at-large shall be elected to a term of four years. All  
77 subsequent members at-large shall be elected to terms of four years.

78

#### 79 3.2.2 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND SAFE CHURCH ADVOCATE

80 The member-at-large elected for two years shall act as the first Chair. Each subsequent  
81 Chair shall be a member-at-large who upon assuming the duties of Chair will have  
82 served two years of her/his term. The Chair shall serve as the Church's Safe Church  
83 Advocate.

84

#### 85 3.2.3 APPOINTMENT OF SECRETARY

86 At the first meeting, the Committee shall choose a Secretary who will keep accurate and  
87 complete minutes of meetings and will submit same for approval by the Committee. This  
88 can be any member of the committee.

89

#### 90 3.2.4 TERM

91 The Parish Council shall appoint members-at-large as needed to fulfill any terms that  
92 may from time to time become vacant. An at-large member can serve a total of two  
93 non-consecutive terms.

94

### 95 3.2.5 FREQUENCY OF SAFE CHURCH COMMITTEE MEETINGS

96 The Safe Church Committee shall meet at least once every six (6) months and when  
97 convened by the Chair. All meetings of the Committee are closed to persons not  
98 members of the Committee, except by invitation or request of the Chair. No action may  
99 be taken by the Safe Church Committee except at a meeting called by the Safe Church  
100 Advocate, as Chair of the Committee, and in the presence of a quorum. A quorum shall  
101 be defined as at least three members of the Committee. Where four members of the  
102 Committee are present, the Chair shall not vote, so as to avoid tie votes.

103

### 104 3.2.6 CONFIDENTIALITY OF PROCEEDINGS, DISCUSSIONS, DELIBERATIONS, 105 ACTIONS AND RECORDS

106 The proceedings, discussions, deliberations, actions and records of the Saint Peter's  
107 Safe Church Committee shall be treated with the utmost confidentiality by all members  
108 of the Committee, all members of the staff of Saint Peter's, and any other person who or  
109 may become privy to them. No information arising out of the proceedings, discussions,  
110 deliberations, actions and records of the Saint Peter's Safe Church Committee shall be  
111 shared with anyone not a member of the Committee, except (1) insofar as the  
112 Committee deems necessary in carrying out its functions and (2) as required by law,  
113 court order, or other valid legal process. Nothing in this Section 3.2.6 shall be construed

I14 as grounds for Saint Peter's Church, the Safe Church Committee, or any member  
I15 thereof to refuse to testify or to respond to a valid and appropriate request for the  
I16 production of documents in any legal proceeding. Any breach of this Section 3.2.6 shall  
I17 be grounds for dismissal from employment by Saint Peter's Church or from Committee  
I18 membership, and may be grounds for legal action.

I19

### I20 3.3 SAFE CHURCH COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS

I21

#### I22 3.3.1 MANAGEMENT OF BACKGROUND CHECKS

I23 Prior to any person's commencing service as a Saint Peter's Church employee or  
I24 volunteer, the Safe Church Committee shall confirm that a background check has been  
I25 completed for that person if he or she, in the performance of his or her duties as an  
I26 employee or volunteer, has the potential for unaccountable, unsupervised time with a  
I27 child or youth. At least once every six months, the Committee shall review the  
I28 background check log maintained by the Church Administrator to confirm that the log is  
I29 accurate and complete and that all required background checks have been performed.  
I30 The Committee may recommend at any time that an additional background check be  
I31 performed on any person already serving as an employee or volunteer of Saint Peters  
I32 Church, prompted by suspicious activity.

I33

#### I34 3.3.2 INCIDENT REPORT REVIEW

I35 The Safe Church Committee shall review each Incident Report submitted by the Triage  
I36 Subcommittee (see below) and determine necessary and appropriate follow-up. Follow-  
I37 up may include, but need not be limited to:

- I38 • consulting with parties knowledgeable about the reported incident;
- I39 • offering any individual who is the subject of an Incident Report an opportunity to  
I40 respond to the Committee, in writing, to any allegations;
- I41 • consulting with individuals and/or groups with relevant expertise; and
- I42 • ameliorating any known threat or condition to prevent recurrence.

I43  
I44 The Committee shall create a written Closure Report when the review is complete. The  
I45 Closure Report shall include a summary of the required follow-up, combined with action  
I46 taken or recommended actions.

I47

### I48 3.3.3 REVIEW OF PRACTICES

I49 The Safe Church Committee shall periodically audit Saint Peter's Church off-site trip  
I50 practices concerning medical form completion and chaperone and driver practices to  
I51 confirm compliance with the Saint Peter's Church Safe Church policy.

I52

### I53 3.3.4 ORIENTATION

I54 The Safe Church Committee shall provide a regular orientation of this Safe Church  
I55 policy for Saint Peter's Church Committee chairpersons and other appropriate and  
I56 interested parties.

I57

158 3.4 RECORD MAINTENANCE

159

160 3.4.1 RECORD CONTENT

161 Safe Church Committee records shall include, but shall not be limited to:

- 162 • Background check application forms and associated documents;
- 163 • Completed medical forms;
- 164 • Completed driver forms;
- 165 • Incident Reports, associated follow-up records and Closure Reports;
- 166 • Minutes of the Committee and Subcommittee;
- 167 • Written confirmation of receipt of the Saint Peter's Church Safe Church Policy by  
168 building and grounds users.

169

170 3.4.2 RECORD STORAGE

171 Safe Church Committee records shall be kept in a locked file in a locked office within  
172 the Church or an approved off-site location. Access to these records will be limited to  
173 the Committee except as the Committee may provide.

174

175 3.4.3 RECORD RETENTION

176 A written summary of the Safe Church proceedings in all cases will be maintained for  
177 seven years.

178

179 3.5 INCIDENT REPORT TRIAGE SUBCOMMITTEE

180



181 3.5.1 COMPOSITION OF INCIDENT REPORT TRIAGE SUBCOMMITTEE

182 The Safe Church Advocate, designated Pastor and Parish Council President (or Vice  
183 President) shall serve as the Incident Report Triage Subcommittee (hereinafter  
184 “Subcommittee”).

185

186 3.5.2 INCIDENT REPORT TRIAGE SUBCOMMITTEE PROCEDURES

187 Upon receipt of an Incident Report, the Subcommittee shall review the matter reported  
188 to determine whether the allegations set forth, if proven, describe an incident that a  
189 reasonable person would believe could constitute a serious threat to the safety and  
190 well-being of any individual or group connected to Saint Peter’s Church, or to the  
191 congregation of Saint Peter’s Church as a whole. If and when the Subcommittee  
192 determines that the allegations, if proven, describe such an incident, the Subcommittee  
193 shall ensure that an Incident Report is provided to the full Committee within 24 hours,  
194 and the Chair shall convene a meeting of the full Committee as soon as practicable so  
195 that the Committee may take the actions set forth below. If the Subcommittee  
196 determines that the allegations do not describe an incident that could constitute a  
197 serious threat to the safety and well-being of any individual or group connected to Saint  
198 Peter’s Church, or to the congregation of Saint Peter’s Church as a whole, the  
199 Subcommittee will submit a written report of that determination to the full Committee.

200

201 3.6 PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION,  
202 HARASSMENT OR ABUSE

203

204 3.6.1 SEXUAL EXPLOITATION, HARASSMENT OR ABUSE REPORTING AND  
205 ACTION

206 Any incident of suspected Sexual Exploitation, Harassment or Abuse shall be reported  
207 to the Triage Subcommittee. Upon receipt of any such report involving a child, the Safe  
208 Church Advocate or a Pastor shall make a report to the Administration of Child Services  
209 (“ACS”) if the a majority of the members of the Triage Subcommittee agrees that there  
210 is reason to believe that child abuse has occurred, and the reporter will provide his/her  
211 identity and contact information to ACS for follow-up. If a majority of the members of  
212 the Triage Subcommittee agrees that there is reason to believe that a crime may have  
213 been committed, the Safe Church Advocate or a Pastor shall make a report to the  
214 police, providing his/her identity and contact information for follow-up. The Triage  
215 Subcommittee or the reporting person may seek competent legal advice before doing  
216 so, and reasonable payment for such consultation shall not be unreasonably withheld  
217 by the Parish Council.

218

219 *Further Action:*

- 220 • The Safe Church Committee shall meet as promptly as possible to review the  
221 Incident Report. After appropriate review of the Incident Report, the Committee  
222 shall first, by majority vote, make either (1) a final finding that sexual exploitation,  
223 harassment or abuse did not occur, or (2) a preliminary finding that sexual  
224 exploitation, harassment or abuse did occur.
- 225 • Upon a final finding by the Committee that sexual exploitation, harassment or  
226 abuse did not occur, the Committee shall either (1) close the matter by filing a

227 Closure Report, or (2) take appropriate further action, which, if the reported  
228 person is a non-pastoral employee of Saint Peter's Church, may include:

- 229 ○ a recommendation to the Pastoral Staff that the employee's duties  
230 be temporarily or permanently modified or reassigned; and/or
- 231 ○ a recommendation to the Pastoral Staff that the employee be  
232 offered pastoral counseling;
- 233 ○ if the reported person is in an authorized volunteer position at the  
234 church, a recommendation to the Pastoral Staff that the reported  
235 person be asked to resign said position; or
- 236 ○ probationary standing, with the terms of the probation clearly  
237 defined.

238 Upon a preliminary finding by the Committee that sexual exploitation, harassment or  
239 abuse did occur, the Safe Church Advocate shall promptly provide to the reported  
240 person written notice that such a preliminary finding has been made. Such notice shall  
241 contain a summary of the Incident Report, including the date, location and approximate  
242 time of the alleged incident, but shall *not* include the identity of the person making the  
243 report, unless that person gives his/her permission in writing to the Safe Church  
244 Advocate for the inclusion of such information. The notice shall also inform the reported  
245 person that he/she may submit a written response to the Safe Church Committee, such  
246 response to be submitted (if at all) to the Safe Church Advocate within 24 hours of  
247 receipt of the notice.

248

249 As promptly as possible but no sooner than 24 hours after receipt of the notice by the  
250 reported person, the Safe Church Committee shall reconvene to make a final finding by  
251 majority vote. The Committee shall consider any written response submitted by the  
252 reported person.

253  
254 If the Committee then makes a final finding that sexual exploitation, harassment or  
255 abuse did not occur, it shall take the steps set out immediately above. However, if the  
256 Committee makes a final finding that sexual exploitation, harassment or abuse did  
257 occur, it shall recommend to the Parish Council that the Council take action accordingly.

258 Such action may include one or more of the following:

259 Dismissal from:

- 260 • employment by the church
- 261 • authorized volunteer position at the church
- 262 • affiliation with, or membership in, Saint Peter's Church, following the  
263 procedures outlined in the Constitution of Saint Peter's Church, Chapter  
264 15, Discipline of Members and Adjudication.

265  
266 3.7 LEGAL COUNSEL  
267 The Safe Church Committee may seek the advice of legal counsel (of its choosing) or  
268 others in performing its functions. Any reasonable expenditures for such advice shall be  
269 paid by Saint Peter's Church as authorized by the Parish Council, and such  
270 authorization shall not be unreasonably withheld.

271

272 3.8 SPECIAL REPORTING IN EVENT OF INCIDENT INVOLVING ROSTERED  
273 LEADER

274 In addition to a Safe Church Incident Report and the appropriate action taken by the  
275 Committee, all allegations of behavior that call into question the fitness for public  
276 ministry of any rostered leader or person preparing to be a rostered leader will be  
277 promptly forwarded to the Bishop of the Metropolitan New York Synod of the  
278 Evangelical Lutheran Church of America. The Metropolitan NY Synod may be  
279 contacted at: (212) 665-0732. A written report will be made in all cases.

280

281

282 **4.0 BUILDING USE**

283

284 In order to provide a safe church environment for all who use Saint Peter's Church  
285 facilities, all groups, organizations and persons who make use of our facilities are  
286 expected to limit their building use to the specific spaces outlined in their space use  
287 contract.

288

289

290 **5.0 EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS**

291

292 Before temporary or permanent hiring, and certainly before beginning their duties, all  
293 prospective employees shall cooperate with and submit to a background check,  
294 including but not necessarily limited to inquiries of references and a criminal history

295 verification by a third party vendor. (As of August 2010, PayChex is performing this  
296 duty.) Saint Peter's Church is compliant with the laws of the State of New York for  
297 religious institutions regarding the hiring of convicted felons. All prospective employees  
298 shall confirm in writing their understanding that any refusal to provide full and accurate  
299 information in their application for employment, any refusal to submit to a background  
300 check, and/or any findings in the background check that, in the discretion of the Pastoral  
301 Staff or the Safe Church Committee, make them unsuited for employment by Saint  
302 Peter's Church, shall be grounds for refusal to hire, rescission of any offer of  
303 employment, or termination, as may be applicable.

304

305

306

## 307 **6.0 REQUIREMENTS FOR COMMENCING AND CONTINUING MINISTRY**

308

### 309 **6.1 LAY MINISTERS**

310 Before beginning their duties, all Lay Ministers will:

- 311 • submit a disclosure form (See Exhibit A)
- 312 • be personally interviewed by a pastor or a designate of a pastor to assess the  
313 suitability of their character and qualifications for the position they seek.

314

### 315 **6.2 ROSTERED LEADERS**

316 Rostered leaders or those persons preparing to be rostered leaders are required to  
317 have fulfilled the applicable requirements and be in compliance with applicable

318 regulations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or its equivalent. This may  
319 include, but is not limited to, comprehensive psychological screening, boundary training  
320 and comprehension of related policies.

321

## 322 6.3 ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR CHILD AND YOUTH MINISTRY

323 Saint Peter's Church is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment in which  
324 young people can learn about and experience God's love. It is the policy of this church  
325 to provide adequate supervision and safeguards for child and youth activities. In order  
326 to promote this, Saint Peter's Church has established the following guidelines in  
327 addition to its general requirements for the child and youth ministers.

328

### 329 6.3.1 NON-EMPLOYEE LAY MINISTERS

330 Only those who have been members of Saint Peter's Church for at least six months or,  
331 if not members, have been regularly and frequently associated with Saint Peter's  
332 Church, shall be allowed to serve as volunteer lay ministers working with minors.

333

### 334 6.3.2 DISCLOSURE FOR NON-EMPLOYEE LAY MINISTERS

335 All volunteers who regularly work with children and youth will complete and submit a  
336 disclosure document (see Exhibit B).

337

### 338 6.3.3 REGISTERED SEX OFFENDER REVIEW

339 The Church will conduct a registered sex offender review for each Lay Minister by  
340 searching their name on the Department of Justice website at [www.nsopr.gov](http://www.nsopr.gov). This  
341 registered sex offender review will be repeated every two years for all Lay Ministers.

342

#### 343 6.3.4 ORIENTATION TO SAFE CHURCH POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

344 All Rostered Leaders and Lay Ministers who regularly work with children and youth will  
345 receive orientation regarding safe church policy and procedures (See Exhibit E).

346

347

### 348 **7.0 TRANSPORTATION RULES**

349 When church activities require transportation, public transportation should be used as  
350 much as possible. However, in cases in which driving private vehicles is necessary,  
351 Saint Peter's Church has adopted the following rules.

352

#### 353 7.1 PRIVATE VEHICLE DRIVER

354

##### 355 7.1.1 DRIVER INFORMATION

356 Prior to using a private vehicle to transport minors on church activities, the driver will  
357 complete and provide to the adult church staff member in charge of the activity (or his or  
358 her designee) a Saint Peter's Church Driver Information Form providing:

- 359 • Name
- 360 • Address
- 361 • Telephone number



- 362 • Driver's license number
- 363 • Insurance company insuring the vehicle
- 364 • Name and address of vehicle owner (if not the driver)
- 365 • Vehicle description
- 366 • Vehicle license plate number
- 367 • Confirmation that the vehicle has a current inspection sticker, and the number of  
368 that sticker
- 369 • Disclosure of any:
  - 370 • At fault accidents
  - 371 • Repeated moving traffic violations
  - 372 • License suspensions
  - 373 • DWI Convictions

374

#### 375 7.1.2 INELIGIBLE DRIVER

376 Any driver who has had any at-fault accidents, repeated moving traffic violations, or  
377 license suspension within the last two years is ineligible to transport persons on church  
378 activities. Any driver who has ever been convicted of reckless driving or driving while  
379 intoxicated or under the influence, is similarly ineligible.

380

#### 381 7.1.3 DRIVER IMPAIRMENT RESTRICTION

382 The operator of a vehicle that will transport persons on church activities shall not use  
383 alcohol or drugs that may impair his or her ability to operate the vehicle.

384

385 7.1.4 YOUTH DRIVER RESTRICTION

386 The operator of any vehicle being used to transport any other person not related to the  
387 driver to, from or during Church-sponsored activities must be a duly licensed person at  
388 least 21 years of age.

389

390 No person may drive minor passengers to, from or during any Church-sponsored  
391 activity without the express written permission of said passengers' parents.

392

393 7.1.5 DRIVER OPERATOR RESTRICTION

394 A vehicle leased for transportation of persons on church activities will only be operated  
395 by the person listed as the operator or the additional driver on the vehicle lease  
396 contract.

397

398 7.2 INDIVIDUAL SEAT BELT

399 All drivers and passengers of private vehicles being used to transport persons on  
400 church activities will wear an individual seat belt (no multiple belting) at all times during  
401 operation of the vehicle.

402

403 7.3 CHARTER BUS

404 Buses shall be chartered only from companies fully insured and certified to operate in all  
405 states between the church and the destination of the planned trip.

406

407 7.3.1 CHARTER BUS DRIVER REQUIREMENTS

408 The Saint Peter's Church person planning the trip shall request the charter company to  
409 show on the printed charter order that the coach operator will be required to show his or  
410 her:

- 411 • Valid Commercial Driver's License
- 412 • Medical Certificate (also known as the "DOT" card.)
- 413 • Driver's Log

414

415

416 Reputable charter companies dispatch operators who are qualified. However, only the  
417 operator can show qualification at any given time. Telling the charter company that the  
418 operator will be required to show the documents above will serve as a useful reminder.  
419 No responsible operator will refuse.

420

421 Trip organizers will check with the charter company to ensure that their vetting  
422 procedures are consistent with the Saint Peter's Church driver policy.

423

#### 424 7.4 TRAVEL RESTRICTION RECOMMENDATION

425 Trips should be planned to avoid travel between 11:00 pm and 6:00 am the next day.

426

427

### 428 **8.0 USE OF TECHNOLOGY**

429

#### 430 8.1 CHURCH NETWORK

431 Church network usage on the church's premises (on church or personal computers) is  
432 strictly for the purpose of fulfilling the church's ministry and mission.

433

## 434 8.2 CHURCH DESKTOP AND LAPTOP COMPUTERS

435

### 436 8.2.1 PASSWORD PROTECTION

437 Every church desktop and laptop computer should be password protected. All  
438 computers should have a screen-saver that automatically locks the screen after 15  
439 minutes of non-use.

440

441 Individuals given church logins and passwords should not share their personal  
442 login/password information with anyone other than the computer administrator. This  
443 information should be kept confidential and not written down in public view. If  
444 logins/passwords are shared, disciplinary action may be taken.

445

### 446 8.2.2 COMPUTER SIGN-OUT LOG

447 If a shared laptop computer is removed from church premises, a sign-out log will record  
448 the user's name, the date that the computer was checked out and expected return date.

449

### 450 8.2.3 INAPPROPRIATE USE OF CHURCH COMPUTERS

451 Any inappropriate use of church computers should be brought to the attention of the  
452 Senior Pastor for investigation and subsequent follow-up measures.

453

454 8.3 CHURCH DIRECTORY

455 Use of Saint Peter's Church's printed or online directory is limited to active members of  
456 the congregation, and the directory is available only upon request.

457

458 8.4 CHURCH DATABASE

459 Only authorized members of the staff of Saint Peter's Church may use the church  
460 database for the sole purpose of conducting the ministry and mission of the church.

461

462

463 **9.0 PASTORAL COUNSELING AND INDIVIDUAL CONFESSION**

464

465 9.1 GENERAL

466 The regularly called pastors of Saint Peter's Church are to offer pastoral counseling in  
467 an environment that is safe for all involved parties (in accordance with the ELCA  
468 document for ethical pastoral counseling).

469

470 9.2 LOCATION

471 All counseling is to take place in a well-lit location either on the church premises or in a  
472 public location in clear view of others. The clergy offices have been designed with glass  
473 windows with a full view of the office from the street and are an ideal location for  
474 counseling. Other appropriate locations for counseling include the Narthex, Chapel and  
475 Sanctuary.

476

477 9.3 SPECIAL LICENSURE

478 Aside from pastors with regular calls from the congregation, professional Pastoral  
479 Counselors must be licensed by the State of New York and must abide by the state's  
480 Code of Ethics for licensed mental health counselors, as well as the Code of Ethics of  
481 their accrediting association.

482

483 9.4 SPECIAL PROVISIONS FOR CHILD AND YOUTH COUNSELING

484 Parental permission is not required for an individual event of youth or child counseling.

485

486 9.4.1 ADDITIONAL PRESENCE

487 If a pastor or staff member needs to be alone in a closed room with a youth or child for  
488 ongoing counseling purposes, parents must give permission. However, in both cases,  
489 another staff member should be present in the building at the same time, and be  
490 informed of the session.

491

492 Generally speaking, adult advisors and staff should not be alone individually with a  
493 youth or child at any time. However, some youth or children may seek or benefit from  
494 private counseling with an adult. In such an event, the following steps must be taken:

- 495 • If the meeting occurs at the church, it must take place in a room with an  
496 observation window or if there is no window, with the door ajar. The clergy offices  
497 have been designed with glass windows with a full view of the office from the  
498 street and are an ideal location for counseling. Another adult in the church should  
499 know of the meeting in advance. If clergy or staff needs to be alone in a closed

500 room with a youth or child participant for ongoing counseling purposes, parents  
501 must give permission.

502 • If the meeting occurs outside the church, it must take place in an easily  
503 observable public place, and another adult in the church should know of the  
504 meeting in advance.

505 • If a need for a one-to-one meeting arises on a trip away from the church, the  
506 adult advisor must inform another adult advisor beforehand where they are going  
507 to converse, and how long the conversation is likely to last. The meeting must  
508 occur in a place visible to others (i.e., outside, within view of another adult leader;  
509 inside, at one end of a large room or in a room with an observation window, or in  
510 a room with the door ajar).

511 • The advisors and staff must adhere at all times to the reporting requirements and  
512 confidentiality policies of the church.

513

## 514 9.5 SUSPECTED ABUSE OR IMMINENT DANGER TO LIFE

515

### 516 9.5.1 MANDATED REPORTING

517 In the State of New York, clergy are mandated to report any instance of child or elder  
518 abuse or if someone's life is in imminent danger.

519

520 Apart from these legal requirements, the regularly called pastors of Saint Peter's Church  
521 will report to the appropriate authorities, including but not limited to the Administration  
522 for Children's Services, if at any time there is reasonable cause to believe that a minor

523 or adult is abused or neglected. Any Minister of the church who has a reasonable good  
524 faith belief that abuse or neglect has occurred, or that there exists a substantial risk that  
525 abuse or neglect may occur in the reasonably foreseeable future, shall immediately  
526 report the matter to the regularly called pastors of Saint Peter's Church so that  
527 appropriate action may be taken in a timely manner.

528

#### 529 9.5.2 NEW YORK STATE CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE

530 The New York State Child Abuse Hotline currently is: 1-800-342-3720.

531

#### 532 9.5.3 SAFE CHURCH ADVOCATE

533 If an incident of church-related misconduct occurs, then the incident must be reported to  
534 the Safe Church Advocate or a pastor, as outlined in Section 3.6.1. Confidentiality as  
535 described in Section 3.2.6 shall be maintained by all. Because of the vulnerability of  
536 children, their right to our protection supersedes a counselee's right to confidentiality.

537

### 538 **10.0 EMERGENCY CONTACT CARD**

539 Members of and other persons associated with the Saint Peter's Church community are  
540 encouraged to complete an emergency contact card to be kept in the church office in  
541 case of emergency.

542

### 543 **11.0 PROCEDURES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

544

#### 545 11.1 GENERAL GUIDELINES



546

547 11.1.1 DISCIPLINE

548 The purpose of discipline with children and youth is to maintain order in a manner  
549 consistent with the teaching of Christian responsibility, respect, and cooperation.

550 Positive reinforcement is the most appropriate form of discipline. Teachers, advisors,  
551 aides, volunteers, and others helping in the room are encouraged to listen to the child,  
552 communicate positive and reasonable expectations of appropriate behavior, offer  
553 choices, use time-outs or redirect the child with alternative choices and/or encourage  
554 children to verbalize their feelings.

555

556 If a child repeatedly displays inappropriate behavior, the teacher will contact the church  
557 school supervisor for assistance and advice. The supervisor will determine  
558 whether/when to contact the child's parent(s) or other guardian(s). No spanking,  
559 restraint or other corporal punishment of any kind shall be used. Verbal reprimands  
560 shall not include destructive criticism, insult, profanity, or shouting.

561

562 11.1.2 INJURY/ACCIDENT REPORT

563 These forms are found in each room and should be filled out anytime a child is hurt,  
564 falls, or becomes ill. Parents should be notified as soon as possible of any injury and  
565 any first aid administered. There is a separate form for reporting suspected neglect or  
566 sexual abuse, which may be obtained by contacting a member of the pastoral staff, the  
567 Parish Council President, or the Safe Church Advocate.

568

569 11.1.3 FIRST AID AND HEALTH PRACTICES

570 First aid supplies are available on each floor. A procedure for identifying children with  
571 allergies and protecting children from exposure to foods, chemicals, or other materials  
572 to which they are allergic will be available to each room. Hand washing is the first line of  
573 defense against infectious disease. Always wash hands before handling food. It is  
574 equally important to wash after diapering and using the toilet, and after handling or  
575 cleaning blood, mucus, or vomit. Frequent hand sanitizing is recommended.

576

577 11.1.4 EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

578 Fire safety, emergency evacuation plans and meeting place are posted throughout the  
579 church. Fire Drills will be conducted periodically no less than twice each year. If there is  
580 a medical emergency, teachers should contact parents' cell phone, contact the school  
581 supervisor or a member of the pastoral staff to find parents in church and/or call 911 if  
582 appropriate.

583

584 11.1.5 CPR CERTIFICATION

585 A list of people with CPR training and their cell phone numbers will be available in each  
586 child or youth education room and at the reception desk.

587

588

589 11.2 GUIDELINES FOR CHURCH SCHOOL (GRADES 5 AND UNDER)

590

591 11.2.1 THE TWO ADULT RULE FOR CHURCH SCHOOL

592 All children in the Church School shall be under the care and supervision of at least two  
593 (2) adults.

594

#### 595 11.2.2 SIGN-IN AND SIGN-OUT

596 Upon registration, each parent should submit a list of names and phone numbers of  
597 individuals authorized to sign-out the child. Release of Crib-aged children through grade  
598 5 church school students will occur at the end of the appointed educational time, and  
599 not before. Children will only be released to their parent or the guardian authorized to  
600 receive them.

601

#### 602 11.2.3 RATIO OF CHILDREN TO ADULTS

603 It is important to ensure an appropriate teacher/child ratio in a room environment for  
604 supervision and safety. There should be a minimum of two adults in every room, and a  
605 ratio of: one adult for every 4 children 4 years and under; one adult for every 6 children  
606 aged 5-6 years; one adult for every 8 children older than 6. For example, a class of 12  
607 children under 4 years old, should be supervised by 3 adults who shall be present in the  
608 room.

609

#### 610 11.2.4 RESTROOM SUPERVISION

611 An adult shall accompany children to the bathroom and remain outside the stall unless  
612 the child asks for assistance.

613

614

615 11.3 GUIDELINES FOR YOUTH (GRADES 6-12)

616

617 11.3.1 YOUTH SUPERVISION

618 There should be at least two adults, with a ratio of no fewer than one adult for every  
619 eight students, at all youth programs or activities. If this ratio cannot be met or  
620 maintained, the youth activity may be cancelled at the discretion of a pastor in an effort  
621 to adhere to this Safe Church Policy and to provide for the safety of the youth present.

622

623 Adult advisors for such activities must be over the age of 18 and a part of the church  
624 community, and where possible, should be at least five years older than the oldest  
625 youth present, subject to the discretion of a pastor. The adult advisors must report all  
626 infractions of the youth rules to a pastor or the adult leading the group.

627

628 11.3.2 PROCEDURES FOR YOUTH PARTICIPANTS

629 All youth are expected to act in a respectful manner toward all others participating in a  
630 youth group function. Sexual activity, smoking, possession of drugs or alcohol, violent  
631 behavior, obscene language, harassment, and bullying are strictly prohibited during any  
632 youth group meeting and may result in expulsion from the meeting and the group or  
633 class sponsoring it. Youths attending a youth meeting may not leave early without the  
634 express consent of the youth's parent or guardian, which consent must be conveyed to  
635 one of the adult leaders. Firearms or weapons of any kind are prohibited in the church  
636 building and at all church activities regardless of location.

637

638 11.4 SPECIAL PROCEDURES FOR YOUTH TRIPS

639

640 11.4.1 CONSENT FORMS

641 Written consent of one parent or guardian of a minor will be required for all activities off  
642 the church property, and any overnight activities.

643

644 Youth may not participate on youth trips unless they have turned in a signed Field Trip-  
645 Overnight-Special Activity Consent Form, a medical information sheet (kept on file for  
646 the year with the church), and a Church-Sponsored Trip Rule Form. (See Field Trip-  
647 Overnight-Special Activity Consent Form, and Medical Release Form, Exhibits C and D)

648

649 11.4.2 MEDICATIONS

650 The parent of a child whose schedule will require that s/he receive medication while  
651 participating in a youth trip or other Church-sponsored activity must inform the activity's  
652 adult leader, providing the name(s), dosage(s) and timing of the medication(s), and  
653 contact information for the prescribing doctor. The parent must provide said  
654 medication(s) to the adult leader in the original labeled container(s). Special  
655 circumstances must be discussed with the Supervisor.

656

657 11.4.3 ADULT PRESENCE

658 There should be at least two adults, no fewer than one adult for every eight youths, on  
659 all youth trips. For co-ed trips, there will be at least one female and one male adult. If

660 these ratios cannot be met or maintained, the youth trip may be cancelled at the  
661 discretion of a pastor.

662

663 Adults shall sign an agreement to be present and available at all times of the trip. (See  
664 Exhibit \_\_\_\_).

665

666

667

#### 668 11.4.4 STANDARD OF BEHAVIOR

669 All youth are expected to act in a respectful manner toward all others participating in a  
670 youth trip. Sexual activity, smoking, possession of drugs or alcohol, violent behavior,  
671 harassment, obscene language and bullying are strictly prohibited during any youth trip.

672

673 If Advisors suspect a youth of possessing cigarettes, drugs, alcohol or a weapon they  
674 will ask the youth for permission for a person of the same gender to search the youth's  
675 belongings. If permission is denied, parents will be called and the youth will be sent  
676 home.

- 677 • Under no circumstances are girls or boys to enter the bedroom or bathroom  
678 areas of the opposite sex.
- 679 • Each person's privacy should be respected in bedrooms and bathrooms.
- 680 • Under no circumstances are youth allowed to wander away from the group.

- 681 • Youth attending a youth trip may not leave early without the express consent of  
682 the youth's parent or guardian, which consent must be conveyed to the trip  
683 leader.
- 684 • Youth are expected to adhere to the rules established by the adult leaders  
685 including but not limited to lights out and wake up times, use of electronic  
686 devices, and boundaries.

687

688

## 689 **12.0 DEFINITIONS**

690

691 *Children:* those participating in church activities from infancy through grade 5.

692

693 *Youth:* those who participate in church activities from grade 6 through grade 12.

694

695 *Room Aide:* assistant teachers in educational settings. Room Aides must be a minimum  
696 of 14 years of age and at least 5 years older than the students in whose class they are  
697 assisting.

698

699 *Lay Minister:* a person authorized by the Church to carry out its ministry.

700

701 *Rostered Leaders and Preparing Rostered Leaders:* A person, lay, commissioned or  
702 ordained, who is rostered or is preparing for rostered leadership in the Evangelical  
703 Lutheran Church in America or its equivalent in another church body. This includes, but

704 is not limited to, seminarians, field workers, interns, deacons, deaconesses, associates  
705 in ministry, and ordained clergy (pastors). This also includes those persons  
706 commissioned or preparing to be commissioned as part of the Metropolitan New York  
707 Synod's diaconate program, the Synod's own deacons and deaconesses.

708

709 *Ministerial Relationship:* The relationship between one who carries out the ministry of  
710 the church and the one being served by that ministry.

711

712 *Harassment:* repeated and/or coercive advances toward another person contrary to his  
713 or her wishes. It includes behavior directed at another person with the intent of  
714 intimidating, humiliating, or embarrassing the other person, or subjecting the person to  
715 public discrimination.

716

717 Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical  
718 conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- 719 • Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or  
720 condition or circumstance of instruction, employment, or participation in any  
721 church activity.
- 722 • Submission to, or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for  
723 evaluation in making personnel or church-related decisions affecting an  
724 individual; or



725 • Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an  
726 individual's performance or participation in church activities or creating an  
727 intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or church environment.

728

729 Prohibited sexual harassment includes unsolicited and unwelcome contact that has  
730 sexual overtones, particularly:

731 • Written contact, such as sexually suggestive or obscene letters, notes, text  
732 messages, e-mails, or invitations;

733 • Verbal contact, including telephone contact, such as sexually suggestive or  
734 obscene comments, threats, slurs, epithets, jokes about gender-specific traits  
735 and sexual orientation, sexual propositions;

736 • Physical contact, such as intentional touching, pinching, brushing against  
737 another's body;

738 • Impeding or blocking movement, assault, coercing sexual contact; and

739 • Visual contact, such as leering or staring at another's body, gesturing, displaying  
740 sexually suggestive objects or pictures, cartoons, posters, or magazines.

741

742 Sexual harassment also includes continuing to express sexual interest after being  
743 informed directly that the interest is unwelcome and using sexual behavior to control,  
744 influence, or affect the career, salary, work, learning, or worship environment of another  
745 person. It is impermissible to suggest, threaten, or imply that failure to accept a request  
746 for a date or sexual intimacy will affect a person's job prospects, church leadership, or  
747 comfortable participation in the life of the church.

748

749 It is forbidden either to imply or actually withhold support for an appointment, promotion,  
750 or change of assignment, to suggest that a poor performance report will be given  
751 because a person has declined a personal proposition; or to hint that benefits, such as  
752 promotions, favorable performance evaluations, favorable assigned duties or shifts,  
753 recommendations or reclassifications, will be forthcoming in exchange for sexual favors.

754

755 *Abuse* includes:

- 756 • *Physical abuse*, which is defined as the deliberate physical injuring of a person.
- 757 • *Sexual abuse*, which is defined as the involvement of a person in any sexual act  
758 or situation for the gratification or benefit of another without their informed  
759 consent.
- 760 • *Emotional abuse*, which is defined as the maltreatment which causes low self-  
761 esteem, undue fear or anxiety, or other damage to a person's well-being caused  
762 by such acts as angry fault finding, humiliating and belittling a person for  
763 mistakes or failures, and deliberate inattention to a person's emotional needs.
- 764 • *Neglect*: not providing food, clothing, shelter, health care, psychological  
765 nurturing, education, supervision, or other basic necessities.