

Summary of the DOMA Policy for the Protection of Children

[DOMA Policy for the Protection of Children](#)

Screening and Training: Volunteers must have 6 months of attendance, an application, reference checks, interview, background check and awareness training (every two years) as well as acknowledge reading the DOMA policy manual.

Interactions: Verbal interactions should be positive and uplifting. Physical contact should be for the benefit of the child and never be based on the emotional needs of a volunteer. No inappropriate displays of affection such as full-frontal hugs, kissing on the lips, sitting on laps (except for nursery), wrestling, tickling, or forcing any affection the child doesn't want. Appropriate physical contact should be given in public spaces where others can observe (e.g., high fives, pat on the back, side hug, head pat, fist bump, etc.). No physical discipline is acceptable. Avoid swearing and sexually oriented communication or video/photo sharing. No gifts without parental permission. No alcohol/drug/tobacco use when serving. No nudity or changing clothes around children at places such as swimming pools and overnight camps.

Monitoring: All activities shall be closely supervised by two or more screened and trained, unrelated individuals. No child should ever be left unattended in the building or on the property. Keep interaction with children in full view of others at all times—no closed-door meetings. Keep unused rooms locked, where possible. Watch out especially for kids who appear on the “outside” of the social group or from a single parent home (due to higher risk for abuse). Review the Supervisory Plan for each ministry location.

Reporting: Immediately report to clergy and Kids Ministry Leader anything you hear or see that violates policies, raises concerns of grooming behavior, or could be potential signs of abuse. Any adult who has received training to recognize and report child abuse is considered a mandated reporter in Virginia. Call the Virginia Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline (800-552-7096) anytime you suspect a child is being abused or neglected.

Responding to a Victim Disclosure: Respect the child's privacy and, if possible, find a second volunteer to join you and take the conversation to a private space. Keep calm, let them know you believe them, they are brave, and it's not their fault. Mostly listen and avoid asking too many questions because attorneys could claim these are “leading.” Write down the disclosure as accurately as possible. Call the Virginia Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline and report it to clergy. Additional Trinity Policy Recommendations

Social media/texting policy: Offenders often use electronic communication and social media to *groom* children or teens for inappropriate sexual interaction. There should be no adult to child interaction on social media if the child is below the minimum age recommended for the media channel (e.g., Facebook minimum age is 13); No photo posting without parental consent. Avoid texting between 10pm and 7am and stick to group messaging whenever possible. No messages or texts unless the parent is added to the chat/text. Model good online behavior and do not engage with any inappropriate posts authored by our youth.

Transportation: Review the [DOMA Policy for the Protection of Children](#) (page 21) prior to transporting any children in your vehicle as a volunteer.

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Communications: There are three major communication breakdowns when child abuse reports are investigated. 1) someone saw something “off” but not identifying as an issue in isolation 2) someone understood the behavior as a policy violation but did not report. 3) an incident report was not taken seriously. Regular communication with clergy and Kids Ministry Leaders helps us identify trends over time. We will establish a regular cadence of meetings to identify discipline concerns, potential grooming behaviors, and general concerns about a child’s wellness.

Diapering: Only the child’s parent or legal guardian will undertake the diapering of children.

Toilet Training: Only screened and trained female nursery workers or the child’s parent or legal guardian will participate in toilet training efforts with children. When children need assistance in bathrooms, the stall door will be left partially open. “Accidents” should be handled by reassuring the child and having the parent change the underwear and clothing.

PreK Bathroom Breaks: Children should be accompanied to the restroom for supervision, but the helper should NOT enter the bathroom. If the child requires assistance, the helper should get a parent, when feasible.

Elementary Bathroom Breaks: Children should be accompanied to the restroom for supervision by a similar aged buddy, but the buddy should NOT enter the bathroom. Only one child should be in the bathroom at a time regardless of the number of stalls.

Club 456/Youth Bathroom Breaks: Children should go to the restroom unaccompanied at this age unless using the buddy system in a public venue. At the Community Centers, only one child should be in the bathroom at a time regardless of the number of stalls.

First Aid and Medication: Parents should be notified whenever first aid has been administered. If possible, any medication should be administered by the parent. Time sensitive medication may be given to a child by a staff member or volunteer as authorized by the parent (e.g., Epipen). The medication must be in the original packaging, including over-the-counter medication.

Facts to Remember

- 90% of abusers are men and started abusing children when they were around age 13.
- One third of abuse is done by someone under the age of 18.
- 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men have experienced sexual abuse before age 18.
- 66% of children will not disclose the abuse until adulthood, if ever.
- Male abusers who prefer boys have an average of 150 victims before being caught.
- Male abusers who prefer girls have an average of 52 victims before being caught.
- Only 10% of abusers are ever charged and many of those get plea deals to lower-level crimes (so don’t put too much emphasis on a background check alone).

Statement of Agreement to Comply with Trinity Burke Protection of Children Policy

I certify that I have read both the [Diocesan Policy Manual on the Protection of Children](https://www.anglicandoma.org/policy-handbook) (<https://www.anglicandoma.org/policy-handbook>) and the Trinity Burke Prevention of Child Abuse Policy.

I further certify that I will abide by the provisions of this policy and if I see something, I will say something, as long as I am an employee/volunteer of the church.

Printed Name:

Signature:

Date: