

CHANGE GUIDE

Safeguarding God's Children Policies 2021 (including Changes Made in 2020)

*Major changes to the SGC Policies were made in 2020, with minor additional changes being made in 2021, mostly to address the increased importance of virtual ministries due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Both sets of changes are summarized below, with the **2021 changes in bold print**.*

NEW DEFINITIONS AND CATEGORIES

1. New category of Responsible Person (*Section I.C*) who must be appointed for any event, in person or **virtually**, for youth or children (*Section III.C*) that has particular duties assigned throughout the polices.
2. New categories of Supervisor and Clergy in Charge as persons who have oversight responsibilities for a program and or personnel in a program for children and youth (*Section I.C*).
3. New definition for travel (*Section I.D*) as involving multiple locations over more than two calendar days.
4. A number of new definitions related to gender identity that were added in 2020 were subsequently deleted in 2021 because they do not appear in the policies themselves.

NEW AGE REQUIREMENTS AND RATIOS

1. Change in age requirements:
 - Adult is defined as 18 year of age instead of 21 (*Section I.A.3*)
 - New age requirements for Personnel for certain activities
 - ✓ must be 21 to be a driver (*Section V.D.1*)
 - ✓ for off-site events, at least one Personnel must be at least 25 (*Section V.B.1* and *Section V.C.1*)
 - In the case of travel, the Responsible Person must be at least 25 (*Section V.C*).
2. Adjustments to ratios (*Section III.G*) and special ratio rules for youth during travel (*Section V. B.2*).

INCREASED ATTENTION AND GUIDANCE

1. More attention paid to possibility of abuse by a youth or child to another youth or child (peer abuse):
 - Sexual Activity (*II.B*)
 - Private Activities (*III.J.5*)
 - Overnight Events (*V.E*)

2. **Expanded examples of how to show respect to children and youth with differing experiences** (*Section II.A.1*).
3. **Expanded examples of children or youth who may require accommodations for restrooms and showers to include children who have medical issues or a history of bullying or abuse** (*Section III.J.3*).
4. New guidance as to when one adult may be sufficient (*Sections III.D*) or when an adult is unexpectedly left alone with children or youth in person **or virtually** (*Section III.E*).
5. Clarification regarding the responsibility of parents when transporting children to and from events for children (*Section V.D*).
6. **Revision of the Social Media Policy to address the increased use of virtual platforms. The policy is now the Virtual Ministry, Social Media, and Digital Communications policy** (*Section III.K*)

NEW REQUIREMENTS OR EXCEPTIONS

1. Safeguarding certification required for persons with general key or code access to locked buildings where children or youth may be present **without adequate adult supervision** (*Section III.B.3*). We strongly encourage every organization to give deliberate thought both to who has access to locked buildings and whether or not that access poses risks to children or youth.
2. A list must be kept of everyone who has keys for general access to an organization's buildings (*Section III.B.3*).
3. Preapproval required by head of organization and others for off-site events (*Section V.A*).
4. Prior parental approval required for a minor's involvement in particular activities (*Section IV.A*):
 - Movies rated "PG-13" or above
 - Being photographed or recorded
 - Posting of voice or image online,
 - Off-site event
5. Codification of common practice of registration forms and waiver and release forms (*Section IV.B*).
6. New provisions regarding travel (*Section V.D and Section V.A, B, and C*).
7. Requirement that children are to be provided with basic needs, including the opportunity to sleep at least 7 hours each night (*Section II.C, V.E.3*).
8. New provision regarding First Aid and Medications at youth events, reflecting common sense practices that are likely already being followed (*Section II.D*).

9. New rules regarding having only one child or youth per bed during overnight events and the general rule that 2 adults must supervise any space in which children or youth are sleeping (*Section IV.E.1, 2, and 4*).
10. New weapons and violence policies for children, in addition to the general Weapons Policy of the diocese.
 - Children and youth aren't allowed to have weapons of any kind or items that can easily be used as weapons (e.g., pocketknives, machetes, bows and arrows) at youth events unless pre-approved as part of a camp program (*Section II.G.2*).
 - Violence of any kind is prohibited during activities for children (*Section II.G.3*).
11. Alcohol, including for sacramental use, must be stored in an area inaccessible to children (*Section II.H*).
12. New exceptions to the rules regarding uncovered windows and the keeping classroom doors unlocked during instruction in certain cases involving security (*Section III.I*).

NEW REPORTING AND TRAINING PROVISIONS

1. Requirement that policies and contact information be posted in places where youth programs take place and provided directly to parents/guardians of participants (*Section III.A*).
2. Additions of Responsible Person, Supervisor, and Clergy in Charge to the list of people to whom reports of violations and/or abuse may be made (*Section VIII*).
3. New mention of Title IV, the disciplinary canons for clergy in the Episcopal Church, and the need to report abuse by clergy to the Intake Officer under Title IV (*Section I.C, Section VIII.A.2*).
4. In-person training defined to include live training over an online platform and a new possible exception (with consent of the Safeguarding Minister) to the general rules regarding training (*Section VII.B.3*).
5. **A additional email address is provided for reporting misconduct: report@epicenter.org** (*Section VII.C*).