

Change Guide

Safeguarding God's People Policies 2020

The 2020 policies differ from the 2019 policies in numerous ways:

- **A New Name.** The policies are now called *Safeguarding God's People: Policies for Safe Ministry with Adults*. The name change reflects that the policies cover much more than the prevention of sexual exploitation.
- **Pastoral Relationships are defined more narrowly** as being between clergy and the people in their congregations or as between lay people who do the sort of ministry that clergy do and the people they serve. It no longer covers, for example, people who lead a class or members of a vestry. (*Section I.A*)
- Following the Model Policy of the Episcopal Church, we have a **new category of Vulnerable Adults**, which is defined in Section I.B to include adults who are temporarily vulnerable due to situations like illness or bereavement.
- We have a host of **new terms** in *Section 1*, including some terms from the Model Policies regarding gender identity and expression that may be unfamiliar.
- The **behavioral expectations within Pastoral Relationships** have remained mostly the same, although there is more **explicit language regarding the giving and receiving of gifts** in *Section II.A.1 (c)*, and a new provision that **forbids agreeing to being named as a beneficiary to act as an administrator or executor in a will** of a person who is receiving ministry and in *Section II.A.1 (d)*.
- The **behavioral expectations within Pastoral Relationships have been extended to ministry with Vulnerable Adults** (see *Section II* and *Section IV* generally), and there are **some additional rules to be followed** in ministering to Vulnerable Adults. (*Section II.A.1(c)*; *Section II.C*; *Section IV, B, E, F, and G*). Many of these new rules are similar to those found in our new Safeguarding God's Children policies regarding permission slips, first aid supplies, etc.
- One of the new rules for ministry involving Vulnerable Adults is that a **Responsible Person** (defined in *Section I.E*) must be named for all programs and events. (*Section IV.B*) The Responsible Person must be physically present and is responsible for seeing that the SGP rules are followed. The Responsible Person also has a role to play in administering medications and in off-site events and is included as a person to whom SGP violations may be reported. *Section V. F and G*, and *Section VI*.
- The **definition of Sexual Exploitation has changed**. It is defined in as (1) sex/romance between the ministers and the persons with whom they are in a Pastoral Relationship, (2) between ministers and the Vulnerable Adults to whom they minister, (3) between a Supervisor (defined in *Section 1.C*) and anyone they supervise, or between a Decision-maker (defined in *Section 1.D*) and anyone whose salary and benefits they influence.

- *Section III* contains the provisions that apply to all ministry in our congregations, schools, and organizations. It includes a **new provision forbidding violence** in *Section III.A* and a new provision addressing the **safety and inclusion of transgendered and gender-nonbinary persons** in *Section III.B*.
- The **categories of people needing certification have changed**. They are now Persons in Pastoral Relationships, persons who minister to Vulnerable Adults (defined *Section I.B*), Program Supervisors (defined in *Section 1.C*), and the Wardens of Congregations. *Section VI.A and B*.
- **Members of vestries, school boards, and other boards** (Decision-Makers, defined in *Section I.D*) **no longer need to be certified in SGP**, although they must be trained in the policies. *Section VI.C*. There is an exception, however, for the Wardens of a congregation (senior wardens, bishop's wardens, junior wardens), who are required to be certified.
- Information is provided regarding **Title IV**, the disciplinary canon that contains the standards to which members of the clergy are held. *Section I.E, Section VII.A.1, Appendix i*.
- The **duty to report abuse, neglect, or exploitation of adults with disabilities and elders to the Texas Department of Family Protection Services** under Texas law is addressed in *Section VIII.B*. In Texas, all persons are Mandated Reporters.