

10 December 2015

St. John Orthodox Cathedral  
18936 Monastery Drive  
P.O. Box 771108  
Eagle River, AK 99577  
T: 907.696.2002  
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Dear Staff and Volunteers of St. John Orthodox Cathedral,

In January 2005, St. John Orthodox Cathedral implemented a child abuse prevention policy at the request of our insurance company: "Policies & Procedures for the Prevention of Child Abuse." This policy requires all church and school staff and volunteers who may have frequent and unsupervised contact with children to have a criminal background check on file with the Cathedral. To assist us with this policy, we are utilizing ClearStar to provide us with background screening. All background information will be kept strictly confidential. Please forward any requests for background checks to Maris Kelly or Christopher Kies for follow-up.

Additionally, since 1999, the Antiochian Archdiocese has abided by the sexual misconduct policy: "Policies and Procedures Regarding Sexual Misconduct, Including Education, Prevention, and Assistance to Victims."

All staff and volunteers are required to read and abide by the two-abovementioned policies. I am including copies for your reference and distribution. I am also including a consent form for the background check, which includes a statement of affirmation that the staff member or volunteer has read the policies and pledges to abide by the standards they uphold.

Thank you for your cooperation in upholding these policies and maintaining a high standard of safety for the children of St. John's.

Sincerely,

Christopher Kies

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### **Consent for Background Check**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to allow St. John Orthodox Cathedral to obtain a background check on me.

### **Acknowledgement of Policies**

I also acknowledge that I have read the policies listed below, and pledge to abide by their contents:

- “Policies and Procedures Regarding Sexual Misconduct, Including Education, Prevention, and Assistance to Victims” – by the Antiochian Archdiocese

- “Policies & Procedures for the Prevention of Child Abuse” – by St. John Orthodox Cathedral

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (printed)

**Policies & Procedures**  
**For the Prevention of**  
**Child Abuse**

**St. John Orthodox Cathedral**

## **PURPOSE**

It is the purpose of the members and staff of St. John Orthodox Cathedral to provide a safe and secure environment for preschoolers, children, youth and mentally handicapped persons entrusted to our care. We do this to encourage those preschoolers, children, and youth and their families to grow in their relationship with God and one another.

A safe and secure environment includes a formal, written policy to help prevent the occurrence of child abuse. The following policy and procedures are for the protection of our preschoolers, children, youth, employees, volunteers and our entire church family at St. John Orthodox Cathedral.

## **SCOPE**

This policy shall apply to all current and future workers, compensated and/or volunteer, who will have the responsibility of supervising the activities of preschoolers, children, youth, and mentally handicapped persons.

## **DEFINITIONS**

For the purpose of this policy the following definitions shall apply:

1. "Preschooler," "child," "children," "youth," and "minor" shall be defined as any individual *under* the age of eighteen (18) (or whose mental capacity is that of a minor).
2. "Adult" shall be defined as any individual at least eighteen (18) years of age.
3. "Worker" shall be defined as any adult who serves as a volunteer and/or paid person given the responsibility of working with or caring for minors with frequent and unsupervised contact with minors.
4. "Teenage Worker" shall be defined as any worker at least fourteen (14) years old or older, but under the age of eighteen (18) enlisted to assist with the care of minors.
5. "Child Abuse" shall be defined as verbal, physical, emotional, or sexual abuse of a preschooler, child, youth, or minor.
6. "Criminal Background Check" (CBC) is the procedure used by the United Way Volunteer Center, DPS, or other qualified agency to check the background of adult volunteers for criminal activity.

## **WHAT IS CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE?**

"Any sexual activity with a child – whether in the home by a caretaker, in a day care situation, a foster/residential setting, or in any other setting, including on the street by a person unknown to the child. The abuser may be an adult, an adolescent, or another child, provided the child is four years older than the victim."

Child sexual abuse may be violent or non-violent. All child sexual abuse is an exploitation of a child's vulnerability and powerlessness in which the abuser is fully responsible for the action.

Child sexual abuse is criminal behavior that involves children in sexual behaviors for which they are not personally, socially, and developmentally ready.

Child sexual abuse includes behaviors that involve touching and non-touching aspects.

## **WORKER ENLISTMENT**

1. Whether a paid employee or a volunteer, each worker desiring to work with minors, will be required to complete a Worker with Minors Application which is specifically designed for workers who will be working with minors.
2. After an application is received, prior employment and volunteer service and personal references may be checked. It is suggested that personal references and prior employment and church service references be contacted.
3. Any prospective worker that has prior incidents of sexual misconduct or child abuse should not be allowed to serve in any capacity where they would have contact with minors.
4. Criminal background checks will be performed on each applicant after the applicant has signed the authorization/waiver/indemnity for, and prior to being enlisted as a worker. Subsequent criminal background checks will be performed on workers, randomly or as deemed necessary. (Only qualified representatives of St. John Orthodox Cathedral will have access to the criminal background check report. Recommendations will be given by this individual(s) to the hiring supervisor as to the qualification of applicants.)
5. No volunteer will be allowed to have frequent and unsupervised contact with minors until they have been a regular attendee for a minimum of six (6) months.
6. At the applicant's request, St. John Orthodox Cathedral shall allow the applicant to review his/her criminal history record transcript at the church, but in no event shall the church allow the applicant to retain and/or copy his/her transcript.
7. The church shall immediately notify the agency through which it performed the background check if an internal grievance (applicant disputes) is filed by an applicant because of incorrect information or other reasons related to criminal histories provided by the agency. The church shall submit in a reasonable time period the "Criminal History Record Resolution Request" or similar document to the agency.

## **WORKER TRAINING**

Each new worker will be given the legal definition of child abuse in writing, as well as the policy of the church on reporting of child abuse. New workers will also be required to view child abuse prevention video(s) and read the written materials available on this subject to help them gain an appreciation for the reality of the concern. This will help workers identify child abuse in the future if they see signs of it.

## **VOLUNTEER INFORMATION FORM**

Employees, teachers of minors, and volunteers of activities or programs for minors of St. John Orthodox Cathedral will be required to complete forms providing personal and confidential

information necessary to perform security background checks and reference checks on each individual worker. While this process understandably trespasses into the privacy of our lives, the security of our children outweighs the personal invasion inherent with such investigation and disclosures. All personal information voluntarily disclosed, the results of all security background and reference checks or the refusal of any person to participate in a program or activity in lieu of such disclosure requirements will be maintained in the strictest of confidence.

Whether disclosed voluntarily or by result of the security background check, the following items will automatically disqualify a volunteer from participating in the leadership, sponsorship or supervising of any activities or programs with minors:

Any conviction for:

- Criminal homicide;
- Sexual abuse;
- Sexual assault (rape);
- Aggravated sexual assault;
- Injury to a child;
- Incest;
- Indecency with a child;
- Inducing sexual conduct or sexual performance of a child;
- Possession or promotion of child pornography;
- The sale, distribution, or display of harmful material to a minor;
- Employment harmful to children;
- Abandonment or endangerment of a child;
- Kidnapping or unlawful restraint;
- Public lewdness or indecent exposure;
- Enticing a child.

All charges for these crimes or charges or convictions for any other crimes not listed above will be reviewed by those approved by the church for reviewing applicant transcripts. Only qualified persons (as stated above) may view information obtained on the criminal history record transcript.

## **SPECIFIC ACTS AND OMISSIONS IN VIOLATION OF THE POLICY**

The following acts of omissions are violations of this Policy and will not be tolerated or accepted during any activity or program and are to be immediately reported to the designated program staff after the safety of the child, children, youth, or minor involved has been assured.

- ❖ Any direct observations or evidence of sexual activity in the presence of or in association with a minor.
- ❖ Any display or demonstration of sexual activity, abuse, insinuation of abuse, or evidence of abusive conduct towards a minor.
- ❖ Sexual advances or sexual activity of any kind between any person and a minor.
- ❖ Infliction or physically abusive behavior or bodily injury to a minor.
- ❖ The presence or possession of obscene or pornographic materials at any function of St. John Orthodox Cathedral.

- ❖ The presence, possession, or being under the influence of any illegal or illicit drugs.
- ❖ The consumption of or being under the influence of illegal or illicit drugs or alcohol while leading or participating in a function for minors at St. John Orthodox Cathedral.

### OCCASIONAL VOLUNTEER WORKERS

1. Those who only volunteer occasionally may be required to go through the entire volunteer screening process.
2. Teenagers under eighteen (18) wanting to serve as teen workers with frequent and unsupervised contact with preschoolers or children will need to fill in a Teen Volunteer Information Form and go through the training. They are exempt from the criminal background check.

## **CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION REPORTING**

Any person having cause to believe that the physical or mental health or welfare of a child in the care of St. John Orthodox Cathedral or its ministries has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect shall report the person's belief in accordance with the policy and procedures of the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of North America and Alaska State Law. The attached checklist and Incident Report Form may be used as guides in case of reported abuse.

Every allegation of sexual offense or molestation should be investigated promptly and thoroughly by officials and reported to the church insurance company immediately. If such allegation is factual, the relationship with the worker should be terminated. It is unlikely the problem will ever be handled by relying on promises of the employee or volunteer to reform. Failure to take remedial action will make a claim difficult to defend.

## **CONCLUSION**

St. John Orthodox Cathedral desires to be a church that cares about children through the implementation of the above policy. Adoption of these provisions will enable St. John Orthodox Cathedral to provide a more safe and secure environment for each individual of our church family and its guests.

## REPORTED ABUSE CHECKLIST TO BE COMPLETED BY CLERGY/PROFESSIONAL STAFF PERSONS

In the case of an allegation of child/youth sexual abuse, the volunteer or clergy staff person who observes or to whom the information is reported shall complete the tasks listed below. Date and initial as each step is completed.

Date: _____	Initial: _____	1. For clergy and paid professional staff: remove the accused from the situation and suspend the accused from duties involving children/youth.
Date: _____	Initial: _____	For volunteers: Remove the accused from the situation and immediately notify the closest available clergy/professional staff person who will suspend the accused. If the clergy/professional staff person to whom the allegation is reported is not the department director, the person reporting will inform the director as soon as possible.
Date: _____	Initial: _____	2. Make written documentation of everything done and said. If the person reporting the allegation is a volunteer, both the volunteer and the clergy/professional staff to whom the volunteer has reported will document the procedures taken.

The procedures after this point will be administered by ministerial staff persons only.

Date: _____	Initial: _____	3. Immediately notify the parents/guardians of the alleged victim and respond to their questions and concerns.
Date: _____	Initial: _____	4. Immediately notify state authorities. Failure to report any suspected, alleged or witnessed abuse is a crime.
Date: _____	Initial: _____	5. Immediately notify the minister in charge.
Date: _____	Initial: _____	6. Make written documentation of persons contacted and action taken to this point.



Date: _____	Initial: _____	7. The clergy/professional staff person will immediately notify a member of _____ response team to begin the internal and pastoral care process. This includes St. John Orthodox Cathedral.
Date: _____	Initial: _____	a. notify the insurance carrier of the incident immediately and comply with its investigation, if any;
Date: _____	Initial: _____	b. cooperate with legal and state authorities in their investigations, if any;
Date: _____	Initial: _____	c. prepare a written statement and designate a spokesperson to respond to media inquiries;
Date: _____	Initial: _____	d. provide assistance to the alleged victim and his/her family in obtaining counseling or referral to a mental health professional, if needed;
Date: _____	Initial: _____	e. respond to the needs of the families of the alleged victim and the accused to seek a redemptive solution for all involved;
Date: _____	Initial: _____	f. inform the affected volunteer(s) and paid staff members of the need for confidentiality, and;
Date: _____	Initial: _____	g. consider and respond to the concerns of other parents.
Date: _____	Initial: _____	8. The director of the affected ministerial area will respond to the pastoral care concerns of persons within the department.
Date: _____	Initial: _____	9. Within five (5) days of the alleged abuse, the clergy/professional staff person who made the original report will prepare a written report and send one copy to the state agency and will give one copy to the senior pastor.
Date: _____	Initial: _____	10. Make written documentation of persons contacted and action taken.

# INCIDENT REPORT FORM

Reason for report \_\_\_\_\_

Date of incident \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) and Age(s) of Minor(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Quote the child's first words verbatim: \_\_\_\_\_

Briefly describe what happened: \_\_\_\_\_

What action did you take? \_\_\_\_\_

Has the incident been resolved?  yes  no Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

Were there any witnesses?  yes  no Names: \_\_\_\_\_

Signatures of witnesses (if possible): \_\_\_\_\_

Report submitted to: \_\_\_\_\_