



# **St. Athanasius Orthodox Church**

## **Policies & Procedures For the Safety & Protection of Children**

(Revised February 2019)

Dear Child/Youth Volunteer,

Welcome and Thank You for your willingness to serve the youth of our parish. At St. Athanasius, we take our responsibility to care for children very seriously. These guidelines are intended to facilitate a safe and nurturing environment in which children can grow in relationship with Jesus Christ.

The pages of this handbook provide a general overview of procedures and guidelines for volunteers (and staff members). Our policies are intended to create a safe environment for children, protecting children, you, and the mission of our parish. The following procedures have been adopted and will be diligently enforced.

After you have carefully read this handbook, please sign and return the agreement form located on the last page.

Sincerely,

*Rebecca Wilson, Coordinator,*

*Mary Cook,*

*Deacon Simeon Siskar*

(Child Safety Committee Members)

# St. Athanasius Orthodox Church Policies & Procedures for Children’s Ministry

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## Overview of St. Athanasius Orthodox Church Safety System

**Mission Statement:** The purpose of the Safety Committee is to enable St. Athanasius Orthodox Church Children & Youth Ministries to carry out appropriate activities while safeguarding program participants against emotional, physical or sexual abuse.

**Composition:** The Safety Committee will be comprised of three members appointed by the parish council.

**Meetings:** The coordinator will chair the meeting of the safety committee on a quarterly basis to discuss compliance. The safety committee will also meet on an emergency basis upon the recommendation of a member or following the report of any incident or allegation. After each meeting notes or minutes will be submitted to the parish council.

**Responsibilities:**

1. Applying existing St. Athanasius Orthodox Church policies and procedures related to children's safety and risk management issues.
2. Monitoring all Children's Ministry programs for ongoing compliance with safety policies.
3. Making recommendation to the parish council regarding safety issues.

Because we desire to protect children involved in our care, all staff members and volunteers working with children are required to complete **FOUR SAFETY STEPS** before beginning their ministry with minors.

**STEP ONE: Sexual Abuse Awareness Training**

St. Athanasius Orthodox Church policies and procedures require that staff members and volunteers avoid abusive behavior of any kind. Staff members and volunteers are required to report any policy violations to the priest or a member of the Child Safety Committee. Staff members and volunteers should have a basic understanding of the characteristics of sexual abusers and their behaviors in 'grooming' a child for sexual abuse. Grooming is the process used by an abuser to select a child, win the child's trust (and the trust of the child's parent or 'gatekeeper'), manipulate the child into sexual activity and keep the child from disclosing the abuse.

To equip staff members and volunteers with information necessary to recognize abuser characteristics and grooming behavior, St. Athanasius Orthodox Church requires all staff members and volunteers to view an online sexual abuse awareness training video and complete the test with a passing grade. This training will be renewed every **three years**.

**STEP TWO: Screening Process**

Staff members and volunteers working with or serving children are required to complete a screening process, which includes:

- Safety Application (employees and volunteers);
- Face-to-face interview (employees and volunteers); and
- References (required if volunteer applicant has been a member of the parish less than 2 years).

\*A volunteer must be a Parish member in good standing, have the blessing of the priest, and have attended for at least one year prior to volunteering to serve in positions providing ministry services to children. Exceptions can be made for hiring outside childcare for special events, with the blessing of the priest.

### **STEP THREE: Policies & Procedures**

Staff members and volunteers are required to review the policies contained in this handbook and sign the last page indicating that he or she has read and understood the material, and agrees to comply with policy requirements.

### **STEP FOUR: Criminal Background Check**

St. Athanasius Orthodox Church requires that all staff members and volunteers working or volunteering in children's activities undergo a criminal background check. Depending upon the ministry position, differing levels or intensity of criminal background check may be required. Per our OCA sexual misconduct guidelines, these background checks will be repeated every three years.

#### **KRS 620.030 Duty to report dependency, neglect or abuse.**

**Any person who knows or has reasonable cause to believe that a child is dependent, neglected, or abused shall immediately cause an oral or written report to be made to a local law enforcement agency or the Department of Kentucky State Police; the cabinet or its designated representative; the Commonwealth's attorney or the county attorney; by telephone or otherwise.**

**Any person who knows or has reasonable cause to believe that a child is dependent, neglected, or abused, regardless of whether the person believed to have caused the dependency, neglect, or abuse is a parent, guardian, person exercising custodial control or supervision, or another person, or who has attended such child as a part of his or her professional duties shall, if requested, in addition to the report required in subsection (1) of this section, file with the local law enforcement agency or the Department of Kentucky State Police or the Commonwealth's or county attorney, the cabinet or its designated representative within forty-eight (48) hours of the original report a written report containing:**

- ✓ The names and addresses of the child and his or her parents or other persons exercising custodial control or supervision;
- ✓ The child's age;
- ✓ The nature and extent of the child's alleged dependency, neglect, or abuse, including any previous charges of dependency, neglect, or abuse, to this child or his or her siblings;
- ✓ The name and address of the person allegedly responsible for the abuse or neglect; a
- ✓ Any other information that the person making the report believes may be helpful in the furtherance of the purpose of this section.

## **Policies and Procedures**

### **ABUSE TOLERANCE**

St. Athanasius Orthodox Church has a **zero tolerance for abuse** in ministry programs and ministry activities. It is the responsibility of every staff member and volunteer to act in the best interest of all children in every program.

Under no circumstances will a person be allowed to work with a minor in any capacity, if such person has been (i) convicted of or pled guilty to any criminal charge involving either child sexual or physical abuse, or (ii) charged with a crime involving illegal sexual behavior, whether toward a minor or an adult.

Any inappropriate conduct or relationship between an adult and a minor will be confronted immediately and investigated. Prompt warnings must be issued when appropriate, and the situation monitored very closely. Any adult worker's services will be terminated immediately for continued violations of such warnings, or for a single violation of sufficient gravity.

In the event a staff member or volunteer observes any inappropriate behaviors (i.e. policy violations, neglectful supervision, poor role-modeling, etc.) or suspected abuse or neglect (physical, emotional, or sexual) it is that individual's responsibility to immediately report their observations to the priest or child safety committee member.

### **ENFORCEMENT of Child Safety Policies**

St. Athanasius Orthodox Church staff members and volunteers are charged with the diligent enforcement of all Church policies. Violations of these policies are grounds for immediate dismissal, disciplinary action, or reassignment from Children's Ministry positions for both volunteers and staff members. Final decisions related to policy violations will be the responsibility of the Parish Council.

While there is no universally accepted definition of child sexual abuse, the following description has been adopted: sexual abuse involves contact or interaction between a child (under age 18) and an adult, when the child is being used for sexual stimulation of the perpetrator or another person when the perpetrator is in a position of power, influence or control over the victim. The term sexual abuse is applied any time a child is engaged in a sexual situation with an adult.

### **CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATION**

In the event that the alleged incident of child sexual abuse implicates a church worker (paid or volunteer), that person shall be removed immediately from any further church-related contact with children for the duration of the investigation. Should the investigation conclude that the accused person did commit an act of sexual abuse toward a child, that person will be permanently barred from any further church-related work with minors.

Any person found to have violated this policy may be prohibited from future participation as a staff member or volunteer in all activities and programming involving children or students at St. Athanasius Orthodox Church. If the person is an employee, such conduct may also result in termination of employment from St. Athanasius Orthodox Church.

Failure to report a policy violation is grounds for termination of an employee. Volunteers who fail to report a policy violation may be restricted from participation in any future activities involving children or students at St. Athanasius Orthodox Church.

All records pertaining to the reporting of alleged incidents of child sexual abuse are to be maintained in a locked cabinet in the parish office with access only to the priest, office assistant, and Child Safety Committee members. All records are considered confidential.

### **REPORTING ABUSE OR SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE**

All allegations or suspected incidents of child sexual abuse will be taken seriously and reported immediately to the Rector. For incidents involving the Rector, report immediately to diocesan authority (<http://dosoca.org/administration.html>). The reporter is to complete an Incident Report Form, available online or in the Church office and submit to the Rector (or Warden if allegations involve the Rector). Upon receipt of an Incident Report Form, the Rector or Parish Warden must contact the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) at 1-800-752-6200 or the Jessamine County Sheriff's Office (JCSO) at 859-885-4139 as required under the Kentucky Revised Statutes (KRS 620.030). He will provide his name to

CHFS or JCSO as the person phoning in the report. The time and date of the call must be documented as well as the name of the CHFS or JCSO worker who took the call. The reporter will request confirmation that the report was received either a fax with transmittal sheet included in the file or a return receipt of a certified letter, restricted delivery, in reference to the call reporting the alleged incident (*Example: "This is to confirm our conversation by telephone on June 13, 2012, at approximately 3:00pm, regarding a report of alleged misconduct regarding a minor."*). In the event that a report is made to CHFS or JCSO, the Rector or Warden will also report allegations to the Dean of the Appalachian Deanery, the Chancellor of the Diocese of the South, and the Diocesan Bishop, and any other allegation or charges of misconduct to the Diocesan Hierarchy, in accordance with OCA guidelines. Additionally, a report is to be made to St. Athanasius's insurance carrier and parish attorney by the Rector or Parish Warden.

If an allegation of sexual abuse is made against the Rector, the person making the allegation should instead notify the bishop's office (see above) and the Parish Warden. Once again, the reporter is to complete an Incident Report Form and give it to the Parish Warden. That person is then responsible for notifying the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services or the Jessamine County Sheriff's Office and following the procedures outlined in above.

Should a situation arise in which the circumstances are not clear regarding whether or not an incident must be reported to local authorities under state law, the Rector (or the Warden if the Rector is under suspicion) must consult the appropriate section of the Kentucky Revised Statute (Section 620) which is available online, consult the parish attorney, and discuss the situation anonymously with a representative of CHFS in order to make a determination. The rector or parish warden may also contact the OCA Office of review of Sexual Misconduct and Allegations (ORSMA) for counsel about appropriate action.

All reports made to CHFS or local law enforcement will be made within forty-eight hours of learning of the alleged incident. All actions taken must be documented in writing. Parents of the victim must be notified of the alleged incident.

### **REPORTING OBLIGATIONS TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES**

Staff members and volunteers at St. Athanasius Orthodox Church are required to report suspicions of child abuse or neglect, or any inappropriate behavior to the priest or child safety committee member.

Staff members and volunteers are required to verbally report an incident to the Rector or a Child Safety Committee member as soon as possible after the incident. After receiving a report the Rector will speak with the person or volunteer to whom the child spoke in order to get detailed information about the entire conversation.

If appropriate, the Rector will inform the appropriate law enforcement agencies or Child Protective Services.

### **RESPONSE TO REPORT OF ABUSE**

In the event that the Diocesan Hierarch is notified of an allegation or charge of misconduct pursuant to above, the Diocesan Hierarch may inform the Office of the Metropolitan. In such event, if deemed necessary the Metropolitan will appoint a trained investigator to the case, who will also serve as advisor to the Metropolitan and the Diocesan Hierarch in regard to issues surrounding the matter.

A spokesperson able to speak to the media and the congregation in a discreet, informed, and diplomatic manner regarding the matter may be selected by the Metropolitan's investigator, the Diocesan Hierarch, the Rector, or the Parish Council. The spokesperson may be either a member of the parish, or an individual designated by the Diocesan Hierarch.

Each agent, employee and member of St. Athanasius must always have a parish attorney present while answering any investigative questions from the police or social service agencies regarding an allegation or charge or misconduct. The privacy and confidentiality of all involved will be carefully safeguarded.

A spokesperson able to speak to the media and the congregation in a discrete, informed, and diplomatic way will be selected by the Metropolitan's investigator, the Diocesan Hierarchy, the Rector, or the Parish Council. This may be either a member of the parish, or an individual designated by the Diocesan Hierarchy, who should be able to speak to the media and the congregation in a discrete, informed, and diplomatic way. Any member of the parish must always have a parish attorney present while answering any investigative questions from the police or social service agencies. The privacy and confidentiality of all involved will be carefully safeguarded.

After reviewing the written allegations with legal counsel, the Office of the Metropolitan and the Diocesan Hierarchy will determine the follow up with the accused and the alleged victim and his or her family, making available to them pastoral services. The Office of the Metropolitan and the Diocesan Hierarchy will also determine whether the relevant insurance carrier should be notified, and will prepare a statement to be presented to the parish. The parish will be led through a process of healing once the outcome of the investigation is known.

### **MONITORING GUIDELINES**

**STAFFING** The general rule for all official church activities is that two screened and approved adults must be present where minors are involved. A list of screened and approved adults is kept on file in the church office.

We will have two teachers (unrelated) per religious education classroom or doors will be left open when only one teacher is present. Once released from classes, minors are the responsibility of their parents. For early release of a child, a parent must personally escort the child from the classroom.

Blanket permission from parents must be requested for all special events outside the church. Parents must be notified for each such outing as it occurs. In the context of church-arranged rides, drivers must be insured and any vehicle must be insured; may not be minors, must be reasonably older than the youth or children being transported, must not have adverse driving records, and may never be alone in the car with only one youth or child in the car. *Volunteers who drive children/youth will receive a higher-level driving related background screening.*

Any inappropriate conduct or relationship between an adult and a minor will be confronted immediately and investigated. Prompt warnings must be issued when appropriate, and the situation monitored very closely. Any adult worker's services will be terminated immediately for continued violations of such warnings, or for a single violation of sufficient gravity.

**DISCIPLINE** It is the policy of St. Athanasius Orthodox Church that staff members and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any manner for behavioral management of children. **No form of physical discipline is acceptable.** This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, biting or any other physical force as retaliation or correction of inappropriate behaviors by children. Children are to be disciplined using time-outs and other non-physical methods of behavior management.

**INTOXICANTS** Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drug while supervising children or youth during any program or activity.

**MEDICATIONS** A staff member or volunteer may not administer medication to any child while serving in children/youth ministry.

**NUDITY** Staff members and volunteers serving in children's ministry should never be nude in the present of children in their care. In the event there is a situation that may call for or contemplate the possibility of nudity (i.e. changing clothes during a pool party, weekend or overnight retreat, etc), the staff member or volunteer leading the event will submit a plan to the Rector concerning arrangements for showering or changing clothes.

**ONE-TO-ONE INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN** Staff members and volunteers should never conduct one-to-one, unobserved meetings or interaction with children while participating in children/youth ministry activities or programs. Another trained and screened adult should always be present.

**PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT** Parents have an open invitation to observe all programs and activities in which their child is involved. However, parents who desire to participate in or have continuous, ongoing contact with their child's program will be required to complete the volunteer application and screening process required by St. Athanasius Orthodox Church. Also, parents who leave a child in the care of St. Athanasius Orthodox Church volunteers during church services or activities will be contacted if a child become ill, injured, or has a severe disciplinary problem while participating in children/youth programs.

**PHYSICAL CONTACT** St. Athanasius Orthodox Church is committed to protecting children in its care. To this end, St. Athanasius Orthodox Church has implemented a 'physical contact policy' that promotes a positive, nurturing environment while protecting children. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by those working in children/youth ministry programs:

1. Hugging, pats on the back and other forms of appropriate physical affection between staff members or volunteers and children are important for children's development and are generally suitable in the church setting.
2. Inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden. Any inappropriate physical contact, touching or displays of affection should be immediately reported to the Rector or a child safety committee member.
3. Physical contact should be for the benefit of the child, and never be based upon the emotional needs of a staff member or volunteer.
4. Physical contact and affection should be given only in observable places or when in the presence of other children or volunteers. It is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or misinterpreted when physical contact is open to observation.
5. Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. The personal behavior of staff members or volunteers with children/youth must foster trust at all times. Personal conduct must be above reproach.
6. Never force physical contact, touch or affection on a reluctant child. A child's preference not to be touched must be respected at all times.
7. Staff members and volunteers are responsible for protecting children under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others.
8. Any inappropriate behavior or suspected abuse must be reported immediately to the Rector or a child safety committee member.

**SEXUALLY EXPLICIT CONVERSATIONS** Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from engaging in any sexually explicit conversations with children, and are not permitted to discuss inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating, or sexual activities with any child or youth in a Church sponsored program or activity. This prohibition does not include discussions of sexual morality.

**SEXUALLY EXPLICIT MATERIALS** Staff Members and volunteers are prohibited from possessing (or transmitting to a child) any sexually explicit or pornographic materials (magazines, cards, images, videos, films, etc.) on church property or in the presence of children in their care.

**TOBACCO USE** Volunteers must abstain from the use or possession of tobacco products in church facilities, while in the presence of children or their parents, or during church activities or programs.

**Parents are expected to assume their parental responsibilities at all times.**

**INCIDENT REPORT FOR ALLEGED ABUSE OF A CHILD**

**St. Athanasius Orthodox Church**

**Reason for report:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Incident:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Time-of-Incident:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Place of Incident:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Reporter:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>NAMES OF CHILDREN/YOUTH INVOLVED</b>	<b>AGE</b>

**COMMENTS:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## YOUTH ACTIVITIES CONSENT FORM

St. Athanasius Orthodox Church

Name of youth \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Name of parent(s) or guardian(s)

\_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Home telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Work telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Add cell phone for both parents, youth (if applicable)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact: Name, Phone, Relation

\_\_\_\_\_

### Medical Information

Is your youth presently being treated for an injury or sickness or taking any medications?

◆ Yes ◆ No

If yes, please list medication. Unless otherwise instructed, your youth member is fully responsible for administration of medication. If assistance is needed in administering the medication, please write detailed instructions and give them to the youth leaders.

\_\_\_\_\_

List any medical conditions such as asthma, allergies (food and drug), diabetes, etc.

\_\_\_\_\_

Do you give permission for your child/youth to be given over-the-counter medication as needed and as directed on the label, to treat non-emergency medical conditions that do not require a doctor or hospital visit such as a minor headache, stomachache, or allergic reaction (i.e. Tylenol, Advil, antacids, Benadryl) while at a youth ministry event? (Please Circle) **No**. Contact me or get medical help if my child has any minor medical concerns.

**Yes.** I give permission for an adult youth leader to give my child approved over-the-counter medications as directed on an as needed basis to treat non-emergency

medical conditions.

Does your youth ever sleepwalk? ♦ Yes ♦ No

Youth's blood type \_\_\_\_\_ (if known)

Date of the last tetanus shot: \_\_\_\_\_

Does your youth have a physical handicap or illness that would prevent him or her from participating in normal rigorous activity? ♦ Yes ♦ No

If yes, please explain.

---

Family Doctor: \_\_\_\_\_ Doctor's Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Insurance Co \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Policy holder: \_\_\_\_\_

Policy No \_\_\_\_\_ Group No \_\_\_\_\_

Please include a copy of your insurance card.

### **Consent and Certification**

I, the undersigned, being the parent or legal guardian of the youth named above, do hereby consent to the participation of my youth in all the scheduled youth activities of St. Athanasius Orthodox Church, and any other supervised activities customarily associated with its youth group, including youth rallies and overnight or weekend youth trips. Further, I certify that my youth is physically fit and adequately prepared to participate in all recreational and sporting events. If I wish to revoke this consent for any reason, I will promptly notify the youth leader in writing.

**Note to Parent:** If giving consent for one activity only, or if this consent is otherwise restricted, please specify:

**LIABILITY RELEASE:** In consideration of St. Athanasius Orthodox Church allowing the Participant to participate in youth activities, I, the undersigned, do hereby agree to indemnify and hold harmless The Orthodox Church in America, the Diocese of the South, St. Athanasius Orthodox Church, its clergy, directors, employees, volunteers and/or teachers (collectively herein the "Church") from any and all liability, claims or demands for accidental personal injury, sickness or death, as well as property damage and expenses, of any nature whatsoever which may be incurred by the undersigned and the Participant while involved in youth activities. I, the parent or legal guardian of this Participant, hereby grant my permission for the Participant to participate fully in youth ministry activities, including trips away from the church premises. Furthermore, I, on behalf of my minor Participant, hereby assume all risk of accidental personal injury, sickness, death, damage and expense as a result of participation in recreation and work activities involved therein. The undersigned further hereby agrees to hold harmless and indemnify said Church for any liability sustained by said Church as the result of the negligent, willful or intentional acts of said Participant, including expenses incurred attendant thereto.

I hereby agree to indemnify and hold The Orthodox Church in America, the Diocese of the South, St. Athanasius Orthodox Church, its clergy, directors, employees, volunteers and/or teachers from any and all expenses, claims, costs or attorney fees incurred as a result of claims, actions and/or suits brought by me, my child or on my behalf or on my child's behalf or by anyone else as a result of any accident of injury occurring to me or my child.

**MEDICAL TREATMENT PERMISSION:** I authorize an adult, in whose care the minor has been entrusted, to consent to any emergency x-ray examination, anesthetic, medical, surgical or dental diagnosis or treatment and hospital care, to be rendered to the minor under the general or special supervision and on the advice of any licensed physician or dentist of a licensed hospital or emergency care facility. The undersigned shall be liable and agrees to pay all costs and expenses incurred in connection with such medical and dental services rendered to the aforementioned youth pursuant to this authorization.

**EARLY RETURN HOME POLICY:** Should it be necessary for my youth to return home due to medical reasons, disciplinary action or otherwise, the undersigned shall assume all transportation costs and responsibility.

**TRANSPORTATION PERMISSION:** The undersigned does also hereby give permission for my youth to ride in any vehicle driven by an approved and licensed ADULT chaperone while attending and participating in activities sponsored by St. Athanasius Orthodox Church. My youth and I understand that SEAT BELTS MUST BE WORN AT ALL TIMES during transportation.

**Photo Release Authorization:**

I, the undersigned, authorize the Youth Leaders of St Athanasius Orthodox Church to *photograph* my youth member during any church sanctioned youth activity.

Please Circle Yes or No

I, the undersigned, authorize the Youth Leaders of St Athanasius Orthodox Church to *post* the photos from the church sanctioned youth activity on Facebook.

Please Circle Yes or No

I, the undersigned, authorize the Youth Leaders of St Athanasius Orthodox Church to *tag* the photos from the church sanctioned youth activity on Facebook.

Please Circle Yes or No

**Signature of Parent or Guardian** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Youth Pledge**

During all youth activities and all youth trips, I pledge to follow all instructions of the youth leaders and the adult chaperones, including safety instructions.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Youth**

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Addendum to Child Safety Policy of St. Athanasius Orthodox Church:  
Regarding Convicted Sexual Offenders**

*Covenant of Participation Addressed to Sex Offenders  
Wishing to Worship in the Parish*

St. Athanasius Orthodox Church, hence known as the Church, affirms the dignity and worth of all persons. We are committed to being a community of the Orthodox Catholic Faith that is open to all who wish to worship with us and receive the Sacraments. However, based on your personal history, we have concerns about your contact with children and youth in our congregation. Although we welcome you to our congregation, your participation (whether as a visitor or member,) particularly with regard to children and youth, will be limited to ensure the safety of these persons and to reduce risks to you. The following guidelines have been established to that end:

1. You shall comply fully with all restrictions and requirements placed upon you as a result of any legal actions--past, present, and future.
2. You shall not be alone at any time with any child or youth.
3. You shall be fully accountable to our Child Safety Committee, plus 3 additional people selected by the Rector and the Child Safety Committee (with at least one being the same sex as you.) This group will be assigned to you for the entirety of your involvement in the Church.
  - a. The Accountability Group will establish a schedule with you for when you are planning on being on church property or participating in church events. The Child Safety Committee will keep record of this. (A text group will be established. You will let the Accountability Group know by text no less than one day in advance if you plan to worship at church. You will "sign-in" and "sign-out" by group text when you arrive and depart.
  - b. One member of your accountability team will be with you (in close proximity) at all times when you are on church property or at a church-related event. When using the restroom, one member of the accountability team must make sure the restroom is empty and stay near the door while you are using the restroom.
  - c. The Child Safety Committee, the broader Accountability group, and the Rector will meet quarterly and connect to your parole officer or counselor--and verify that you are adhering to the letter and spirit of this covenant.
4. You are to be present in the nave at all times during worship. You may pass through the narthex (vestibule) but not linger there. If you attend Sunday School, you are to remain with the other adults in the class. At all times, you must have a member of your Accountability Group present.
5. You are to notify a member of your Accountability Group if you are participating in any church-sponsored event off-site, (utilizing the group text "sign-in" and "sign-out" procedure.)
6. At no time shall you hold a position of authority with the Church or serve as a representative of the Church.
7. At no time will your name be allowed to appear in the Church newsletter, the weekly bulletin, or in any item of print associated with the Church, excluding the prayer list and (by request) the Church directory.
8. As part of our church family and in an attempt to provide the safest environment possible, you shall inform your Accountability Group (including the Rector and Child Safety Committee) if you become aware of any other sex offender attending the Church.
9. Terms of this covenant will be reviewed with your probation or parole officer, sex offender treatment provider and any other person involved in your after-care or treatment prior your involvement with the Church.

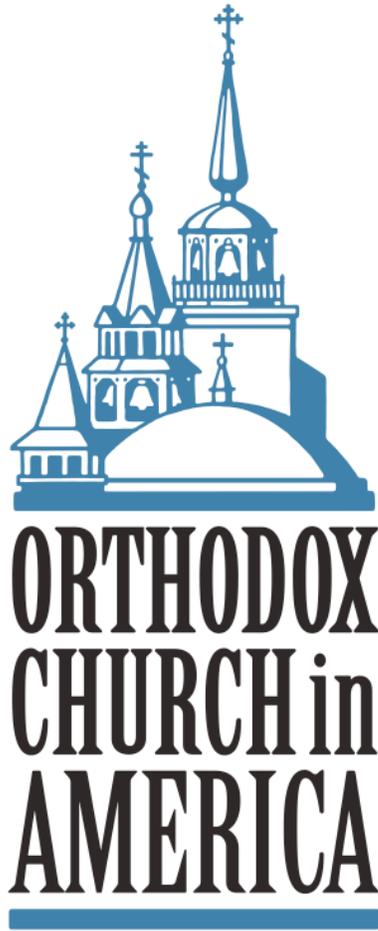
10. This covenant must be signed by you, the Rector, the Child Safety Committee, your probation or parole office, your therapist or treatment provider prior to your involvement with the Church.
11. This covenant will remain on file with the Church and will be readily available to members of the Church. It will be shared directly with all persons involved in direct work with our children and youth.

*By signing this covenant, I agree that if at any time, any item of this covenant is suspected of being broken, I will meet with my Accountability Group. I also agree that, after meeting with me, the decisions of the Accountability Group are final. I agree that if the Accountability Group finds that any item of this covenant was at any time broken, I will immediately discontinue attendance at all church functions. I also understand and agree that all church members will be made aware of the violation. I also agree that any violations will be shared beyond my Accountability Group to my probation or parole officer, sex offender treatment provider, and any person involved in my after-care or treatment. Any violation that occurs that is illegal in nature will be reported immediately to the appropriate authorities.*

Signature	Date	Contact info
Probation or Parole Officer Signature	Date	Contact info
Professional Counselor Signature	Date	
Child Safety Committee Member	Date	
Child Safety Committee Member	Date	
Child Safety Committee Members	Date	
Rector Signature	Date	

*Recommended for Adoption by Child Safety Committee to Parish Council on January 31, 2019*

*Adopted by the Parish Council on **February 7, 2019.***



**ABBREVIATED Policies, Standards and Procedures of the**

*Orthodox Church in America* **On Sexual Misconduct**

**Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America**

**Approved by the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America**

*at the Fall 2013 Holy Synod Meeting Updated March 13, 2017*

**The following is a condensed version of the Policies, Standards, and Procedures on Sexual Misconduct for Parish use in meeting Compliance requirements in regard to the recruiting and supervision of Volunteers working with youth.**

For more detailed information on the definition of sexual misconduct and sexual harassment, as well as the procedures for reporting and investigation of sexual misconduct allegations, please refer to the full version of the PSPs.

**Recruiting and Selecting Parish Volunteers Working with Youth**

All individuals who apply to work with youth in the Church must be screened (PSP 11.02). Anyone who has “more than incidental contact with minors in connection with the Church’s ministries or programs” must go through a screening process commensurate to that particular role of the volunteer. Screening of Applicants who wish to work with youth - Church/Sunday School Teachers, Camp Counselors, Church School Director, Youth Mentor and Advisors, and Chaperones, etc. must go through the following process<sup>1</sup>:

A. The volunteer should be in good standing in the church and have been a consistent member of the parish for at least one year.

B. **Application:** A prospective Volunteer who will be working with or have unsupervised contact with youth must fill out a written application which can be found in the Youth Application Packet at [www.oca.org/about/sexual-misconduct](http://www.oca.org/about/sexual-misconduct).

C. **Interview:** The applicant must be interviewed by either the parish rector or volunteer recruiter designated by the parish rector. The Youth Application Packet has interview questions that can be asked.

D. **References:** The applicant must provide **three** references. A written record of each contact with the referees must be made showing the date and method of contact, the person making the contact, the person contacted, and a summary of the information received. The reference contact sheet can be found in the Youth Application Packet. Each church in which the applicant has indicated prior experience in working with children or youth should be contacted.

**E. Criminal history background check<sup>2</sup>**

F. **Training** on sexual abuse prevention (Darkness to Light: Stewards of Children or other approved program) should occur **before** the volunteer starts his/her new position as a youth volunteer. Once completed, the volunteer should print out the certificate and give it to the rector to be placed in his/her file.

<sup>1</sup> **Exemption:** Church school teachers/directors who have been in their role for **2 years or more (as of June 2015)** are exempt from the interview and reference checks. The rector of the parish must sign the exemption form (below) stating that he vouches for the character of the individual and place it in the volunteer’s file. The volunteer needs to fill out the rest of the application packet as is applicable.

<sup>2</sup> Criminal history background checks are required for other leadership positions as well. For more information, please refer to the **Guidelines on Background Checks** which can be downloaded at [www.oca.org/about/sexual-misconduct](http://www.oca.org/about/sexual-misconduct).

## **Supervision of Church Workers and Children (PSP 13.01)**

Whenever possible, youth involved in Church ministries or programs should not be left in the care of or under the supervision of a single adult. Two or more **unrelated** adults should be present, except for necessary brief absences, during any Church activity involving children. All overnight activities involving youth shall be supervised or chaperoned by at least two (2) unrelated adults, and if youth participants are both male and female, then supervisors or chaperones must be male and female.

Except for emergencies, in any circumstances where a one-on-one interaction with youth is required in connection with a Church ministry or program, the adult to be involved shall first notify another adult of the circumstances, and shall identify the youth and the place and approximate time of the expected interaction.

Prior written permission from a parent or guardian must be obtained for any youth to participate in any youth event or activity sponsored by a parish away from parish premises.

### *Open-Door Policy (PSP 13.03)*

If a parish would like to sponsor or participate in any closed activity or event involving youth, they must get the written permission of the Rector. Clergy, parents, staff, and members of the parish have the right, at any time, to observe any youth activity or event, and are encouraged to do so.

Doors on any rooms in a parish where parish-sponsored youth activities or events are held shall be left at least partially open unless the doors have reasonably sized glass windows, or unless there is adequate adult supervision in the room.

### *Transportation Policy (PSP 13.05)*

Each Bishop shall require each parish in his diocese to adopt and implement a written policy on transportation of youth to parish-sponsored youth activities or for events away from the parish premises. Such a policy shall, at the minimum, (1) require the use of drivers who are reasonably older than the youth they are transporting, and who do not have adverse driving records and (2) prohibit the driver from being alone in a vehicle with one youth unless the driver has the advance approval of the Rector or a youth ministry supervisor.

## **Training and Education**

All youth workers, church school teachers, and clergy (priests and deacons) are required to receive training on the prevention of sexual abuse of children (PSP 14.01). The Holy Synod of Bishops approved the use of the training program *Stewards of Children* which is produced by the non-profit organization Darkness to Light. It is recommended that individuals receive the training every three years. The program is free to all those who register through the ORSMA. Please contact the ORSMA Coordinator, Cindy Heise, at [cheise@oca.org](mailto:cheise@oca.org) or your parish priest to obtain instructions on how to register for the training.

## **Reporting Sexual Misconduct**

Anyone who perceives or believes that a lay worker or clergyman is engaging in sexual misconduct must immediately report it to the parish rector or head of institution (e.g., seminary,

school, camp). If the parish rector is suspected of misconduct, the report can be made directly to the Ruling Bishop and the Office for Review of Sexual Misconduct Allegations (ORSMA) (by emailing [cheise@oca.org](mailto:cheise@oca.org) or calling 516-922-0931).

Any suspected abuse involving children (younger than 18 years of age) must notify local law enforcement immediately, as well as the parents of the child (if the parents are not the suspected perpetrators). Then notify the Ruling Bishop and ORSMA.

Remember, reporting sexual misconduct or suspected sexual misconduct is not the same as accusing someone of sexual misconduct. Reporting means you believe some activity should be investigated by the proper authority to determine if misconduct occurred. If you suspect sexual misconduct, report it. It is not your job to investigate. Your responsibility is only to report concerning behavior.

### **Registered Sex Offenders**

A registered sex offender must disclose to the parish rector his/her status prior to attending the church (PSP 15.01). It is the expectation within the parishes and institutions of the OCA that any registered sex offender will disclose this fact to the church leaders before ever attending any church event. Failure to do so will result in church members not being able to trust the offender within the community and may result in additional community and liturgical restrictions being imposed on him/her.

When a layperson learns of a person's sex offender status, he/she must immediately inform the parish rector. A registered sex offender may not hold any position of leadership or work with youth in any capacity. Please refer to the Registered Sex Offenders Guide for Parishes for more information; it is available online at [www.oca.org/about/sexual-misconduct](http://www.oca.org/about/sexual-misconduct).

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**See next page for Acknowledgement Form for use by parishes**

**Policies and Procedures**  
**Statement of Acknowledgment and Agreement**

I have received and read a copy of St. Athanasius Orthodox Church's Children's Ministry Policies and Procedures Manual and understand the importance of the matters set forth within the manual. I agree to follow and abide by these guidelines during my service at St. Athanasius Orthodox Church.

Further, I understand that the manual may be modified at any time, and that any guidelines may be amended, revised, or eliminated at any time by St. Athanasius Orthodox Church.

I also acknowledge that I have reviewed and agree to fulfill the duties listed in the Manual. While, ideally, I will serve in this ministry for the agreed term, I understand that I may choose to end this relationship at any time. If possible, I will provide two weeks' notice to my supervisor.

I further acknowledge and understand that the materials and guidelines contained in this manual in no way express or imply a contractual employment relationship between St. Athanasius Orthodox Church and me. If I am applying as a volunteer, I acknowledge and agree that I will receive no compensation for hours worked.

Finally, I understand that it is my responsibility to review new guidelines that are created and distributed, as well as manual guidelines that are changed or deleted.

I hereby acknowledge receipt of St. Athanasius Orthodox Church policies and procedures manual and receipt of the Abbreviated Policies, Standards, & Procedures of the OCA.

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Staff Member or Volunteer's name (please print)

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Staff Member or Volunteer's signature

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**[This page is to remain attached for your records.]**

# Safety Application Form for Volunteers

(All Information Kept Confidential)

*This application should be completed by all applicants for any position (volunteer or employment) involving the supervision of children or students. This is not an employment application. The purpose of this form is to assist in the creation of a safe environment for children or students who participate in the programs of St. Athanasius Orthodox Church or use St. Athanasius Orthodox Church facilities.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Drivers License # \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security # \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: \_\_\_M \_\_\_F Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Marital Status: \_\_\_\_\_ (single, married, separated, divorced, widowed, etc.)

How long have you lived at your current address? \_\_\_\_\_

Previous addresses: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

List all other cities and states where you have lived as an adult:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please list *all previous volunteer work or employment* involving children or students including organization name, address with dates when you were there.

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List any talents, vocations, preparation, training or other experiences that have equipped you to work with children or students:

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Please list 3 references—one personal, one professional and one family member (one must be of the opposite sex) with contact information. Let them know they may be contacted by an authorized St. Athanasius representative.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Because we care for children and desire to protect them, please answer the following questions. We understand that the answers to these questions may be private and deeply personal, and we will protect your privacy in every possible context. It is the position of St. Athanasius that suspicions or allegations of child abuse or neglect will be reported to relevant state authorities.**

Why do you want to work with children or students at St. Athanasius?

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Do you have a preference concerning the age group or sex of children or students with whom you would like to work? If so, what is the basis for this preference?

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What is your philosophy concerning re-direction or discipline of children?

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When you are unhappy, angry or emotional about a person or circumstance, what do you do?

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Have you experienced any significant physical or emotional stressors within the past year, such as the loss of a parent, spouse, or child, extreme ill health, or any emotional or physical crisis? If so, please briefly explain. *This question, aimed at SITUATIONAL offenses, is optional.*

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Have you ever physically or sexually abused a child?

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Has someone ever accused you of physically or sexually abusing a child, or molesting a child?

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Do you consider yourself to have been physically or sexually abused as a child? **Yes/No**  
(We realize this information is potentially sensitive, and it will be kept entirely confidential, where another child's safety is not negatively impacted by confidentiality.) If so please explain:

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If you answered 'yes' to this question, would you consider counseling or resources (available through the St. Athanasius) to address any resulting emotional or spiritual harm or damage?

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## RELEASE

I authorize St. Athanasius to contact all individuals, organizations and references listed on this **Safety Application Form** in order to verify the information I have provided. I agree to release from liability any person or organization providing information related to me, including those persons I have listed as references, as well as contact persons from my previous volunteer work or employment with children.

I specifically authorize St. Athanasius to undertake a criminal background check concerning my past.

I understand and agree that any information received from the background check and application verification will not be disclosed to me except as required by law, and I hereby waive any right I may have to inspect any information provided about me by any person or organization identified by me on this form.

By signing this form, I certify and affirm that the information I have given on this form is true, complete and correct in all respects.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



### Volunteer Interview and Reference Exemption Form

I, Rev. Justin J. Patterson, Rector at St. Athanasius Orthodox Church, certify that

\_\_\_\_\_ name of volunteer

has been blessed to work in the role of \_\_\_\_\_ at St. Athanasius Orthodox Church for \_\_\_\_\_ years. As his/her priest and confessor, I vouch for this individual's ability to work with children of the parish. I can attest to the individual's character and suitability for working with minors.

Rector Signature and Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Policies and Procedures Statement of Acknowledgment and Agreement**

I have received and read a copy of St. Athanasius Orthodox Church’s Children’s Ministry Policies and Procedures Manual and understand the importance of the matters set forth within the manual. I agree to follow and abide by these guidelines during my service at St. Athanasius Orthodox Church.

Further, I understand that the manual may be modified at any time, and that any guidelines may be amended, revised, or eliminated at any time by St. Athanasius Orthodox Church.

I also acknowledge that I have reviewed and agree to fulfill the duties listed in the Manual. While, ideally, I will serve in this ministry for the agreed term, I understand that I may choose to end this relationship at any time. If possible, I will provide two weeks’ notice to my supervisor.

I further acknowledge and understand that the materials and guidelines contained in this manual in no way express or imply a contractual employment relationship between St. Athanasius Orthodox Church and me. If I am applying as a volunteer, I acknowledge and agree that I will receive no compensation for hours worked.

Finally, I understand that it is my responsibility to review new guidelines that are created and distributed, as well as manual guidelines that are changed or deleted.

I hereby acknowledge receipt of St. Athanasius Orthodox Church policies and procedures manual and receipt of the Abbreviated Policies, Standards, & Procedures of the OCA.

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature & Date \_\_\_\_\_

.....  
**(Please detach, and place in parish mailbox #4 for office assistant).**  
.....

As Rector of St. Athanasius Orthodox Church in Nicholasville KY, I approve and certify the eligibility of the above named volunteer to work with the children/youth of our parish.

Rev. Justin J. Patterson \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_