

**SAFE CHURCH POLICY  
ST DAVID'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
AGAWAM, MA**

The family of St. David's places significant value on its youngest members, our children and youth. In an effort to promote a safe haven where children can come to know Jesus Christ and experience His love through that of His servants, St. David's Church adopts the following policies. Each segment of these policies is aimed at promoting an environment that is a "safe place, safe for those who worship, safe for those who minister, safe for those who come in need, safe for children, and safe for all who seek to serve Christ." (*Preamble of Safe Church policy for Diocese of Western Massachusetts.*)

Each member of the parish family shall always strive to maintain standards appropriate and acceptable in all aspects of their lives, both in and out of church so that Christian ideals may be modeled and understood, especially for children. Toward that end, every effort shall be made to call to the ministry of youth and children only those known to clergy or congregants for at least six months.

Background checks shall be required in the manner prescribed by the Diocese for all employees, youth staff and volunteers who regularly interact with children or youth. All clergy, lay employees and youth staff shall also be required to complete approved safe church training. Volunteers who regularly interact with children and youth shall likewise be encouraged and supported in the same training.

A representative from the congregation who is familiar with safe church training and who is not otherwise employed by the Church shall be appointed by the Vestry to conduct an annual safe church audit with the Vestry in accord with safe church practices promulgated by the Diocese. This report shall be received by the Vestry and merit full consideration.

Principles of decorum and sensitive judgment should at all times be exercised in circumstances and conversation pertaining to interaction with youth and children, both at ministry events and service. Clearly, at no time shall children be exposed to illegal, illicit, sexual or secretive activities nor be offered alcohol or illegal drugs, nor be provided access to information of a sexually explicit nature.

At all ministry events for children and youth, every effort shall be made to assure two, unrelated adults are present during the course of the event. During regular Sunday school activities, only one teacher may be appropriate provided that one other unrelated adult can maintain visual contact with the teacher(s). If there is an unanticipated need for adults to be alone with children, the Rector or Senior Warden shall be notified immediately and provide consent.

Children shall never be left alone or unsupervised during any ministry event or on any part of Church property. Programs or events involving children and youth should always bear the scrutiny and approval of the Vestry or Rector.

Anyone who becomes aware of real or suspected violations of these policies shall immediately notify the Rector or Senior Warden. If suspicions include the real potential of abuse, a report should be made to the appropriate civil authority. In all cases, pastoral care shall be at the ready for both potential victims and others impacted by a violation of these policies.

When considered at its core, the intent of these policies shall be to safeguard the spiritual and physical lives of its youngest congregants. Every decision shall be made and every activity shall be conducted with this intent in mind.

Approved by St David's Vestry 11/15/05