

Policy & Procedures for the Prevention of Sexual Misconduct

St. John's Greek Orthodox Church

Introduction:

Those clergy or laity who serve the Orthodox Church (whether paid or volunteer) must adhere to Christian moral principles in their sexual conduct. It is a grave ethical transgression for any Christian to betray trust by sexually abusing or exploiting another person, whether child or adult. Sexual exploitation or abuse is a terrible injury to the one abused and a violation of faithfulness to Christ.

With this Policy, St. John Greek Orthodox Church is confronting the fact that sexual misconduct can occur in our church and is instituting policies and procedures for the prevention of such misconduct.

Policy on Sexual Misconduct

Sexual misconduct is strictly prohibited and will be cause for termination of the employee, volunteer or clergyman of St. John who is guilty of such misconduct. In the case of clergy, termination will be coordinated with the diocesan bishop.

Definition of Sexual Misconduct

Sexual misconduct includes any form of sexually inappropriate behavior or contact, whether criminal or not, by employees or representatives of the Church, whether clergy or laity, whether paid or unpaid, and without regard to particular titles or positions. Without limitation, sexual misconduct encompasses:

- a. Sexual abuse, sexual molestation, or sexual offense against any person, including but not limited to, any sexual involvement or sexual contact with a person who is below 18 years of age or who is legally incompetent; or
- b. Sexual exploitation or harassment, including but not limited to, the development of or the attempt to develop a sexual relationship between a clergyman, employee or volunteer and a person with whom he/she has a pastoral relationship, whether or not there is apparent consent from the individual; or
- c. Sexual behavior or sexual contact between a clergyman and anyone other than his wife.

Examples of actions that could be considered sexual exploitation or harassment:

- Touching any part of a person's body that would be covered by a modest swimsuit or the clothing that covers those parts; or
- Stroking the thigh or bare shoulder; or

- Hugging and/or rubbing the back of a person in a way that goes beyond a pastoral or professional relationship; or
- Jokes, conversation or writing with sexually suggestive content; or
- Display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures: or
- Attempts to develop personal contact/friendship beyond a pastoral or professional relationship)

Reporting Suspicious Behavior

Anyone who knows of or suspects sexual misconduct is shall immediately report the incident or suspicion to a priest or any member of the Parish Council. If the misconduct involves sexual offense or abuse against a child, it should be reported also to the local law enforcement authorities in conformity with applicable laws.

Suspicion is cause enough to report. The confidentiality of the victim and the person who reports will be maintained, in conformity with applicable laws.

POLICY ON PERSONNEL EMPLOYMENT & VOLUNTEERS

Requirement of Background Screenings:

Clergy:

Prior to assignment by the Diocese or other paid or volunteer work at St. John, background screenings will be obtained on all clergy. Background screenings shall include such things as: inquiries of bishops having past or present canonical authority over the individual, schools attended by the individual and employers of the individual during the last five years. Additionally, background screenings shall be obtained of any past convictions of a criminal or sexual nature and civil claims regarding sexual misconduct or child abuse/neglect/abandonment. The completion of the Application for Child/Youth Workers shall be a required part of the background screening.

Employees:

Prior to employment, all church employees shall be subject to a background screening of any past convictions of a criminal or sexual nature and civil claims regarding sexual misconduct or child abuse/neglect/abandonment. Other background screenings, including previous employers and personal references, and other screening procedures will also be used. The completion of the Application for Child/Youth Workers shall be a required part of the background screening.

Volunteers:

Prior to assignment, volunteers who regularly supervise youth activities (e.g., youth advisors, Sunday School teachers, regular chaperones) shall be subject to a background screening of any past convictions of a criminal or sexual nature and civil claims regarding sexual misconduct or child abuse/neglect/abandonment. Other background screenings will also be used. The

completion of the Application for Child/Youth Workers shall be a required part of the background screening.

A driving record screening shall be obtained for volunteers who regularly drive on church business or events.

Background screening reports shall be kept strictly confidential.

Compliance:

Compliance with this Policy, including the need for periodic updates of employment and background records, shall be reviewed annually as a part of the annual internal audit of the church, or by another committee appointed by the Parish Council.

Acknowledgement of Sexual Misconduct Policy

Sexual misconduct is strictly prohibited and will be cause for termination of the employee, volunteer or clergyman of St. John who is guilty of such misconduct. Sexual misconduct includes any form of sexually inappropriate behavior or contact, whether criminal or not, by employees or representatives of the Church, whether clergy or laity, whether paid or unpaid, and without regard to particular titles of positions. (A more complete definition of sexual misconduct is found in the Policy.)

Anyone who knows or suspects sexual misconduct shall immediately report the incident or suspicion to a priest or any member of the Parish Council. If the misconduct involves sexual offense or abuse against a child, it should be reported also to the local law enforcement authorities in conformity with applicable laws.

St. John strictly prohibits interaction with children and youth by anyone with a civil or criminal record of sexual offense against a child or anyone who has admitted prior sexual abuse or anyone known to have a paraphiliac diagnosis or tendency (e.g. pedophilia, exhibitionism, voyeurism, computer sex crimes).

Anyone who knows of or suspects sexual offense or abuse against a child shall immediately report the incident or suspicion to a priest or any member of the Parish Council. The suspected offense or abuse should be reported also to the local law enforcement authorities in conformity with applicable laws.

I acknowledge that I have received, understand and agree to follow the Policy & Procedures for the Prevention of Sexual Misconduct of St. John Greek Orthodox Church, Boca Raton, Florida.

Name of Clergy, Employee or Volunteer (Please print)

Signature of Clergy, Employee or Volunteer Date

Signature of Witness Date

Title of Witness