

Application with Policies and Procedures for

Child/Youth Ministry

for St. Athanasius Orthodox Church (rev. 8/2021)(updated 10/22)

St. Athanasius has had a Child Safety Program since 2012. Early in 2021 Fr. Justin was informed that we were required to have our background checks and child safety training done through the OCA program. Our policies and procedures have been revised to not only comply with but exceed the OCA requirements.

The Child Safety Committee at St. Athanasius Orthodox Church is composed of four individuals, appointed by the parish council, who are committed to creating a safe environment for our children, protecting our children, youth volunteers, and the mission of our parish.

Current committee members are: Rebecca Wilson, coordinator, Mary Cook, Jason McCord. The parish office assistant helps with the administration and coordination with the OCA.

After completing the application (pages 2-4) please submit to the office assistant, Kathy Montgomery, and this is the first step in becoming a certified child/youth volunteer at St. Athanasius. You can place the application in the office assistant parish mailbox #4 or scan and email to: officeasst@athanasiusoca.org. Your name and email will then be forwarded to Allison Nix at the OCA who will then request your background check and child safety training. You should check your email (spam/junk) for 2 emails from:

Background Check: message@mobilizemyministry.com

Child Safety Training: message@protectingourkids.com

The handbook with forms and addenda are yours to keep for future reference. Visit the OCA website (oca.org) under “About the OCA” *Resources for the Prevention of Sexual Misconduct* for more information and links on this topic.

Thank you for your willingness to serve!

Introduction

Application w/Signed Acknowledgment Form

Child Safety Handbook

Reference/Interview Exemption Form

Incident Report Form

Youth Activities Consent Form

OCA Abbreviated PSP's on Sexual Misconduct

Addendum Regarding Convicted Sexual Offenders

Addendum Regarding Anti-Bullying

APPLICATION GENERAL INFORMATION

Name (Last/First/Middle) _____

Address/City/State/Zip _____

Phone (Cell/Work/Home) _____

Email _____

APPLICATION MINISTRY INFORMATION

1. What area(s) of ministry have you previously served in? (List church/ministry, position, and dates of service) _____

2. What area(s) of ministry do you desire to serve in? _____

3. Why do you desire to volunteer in children and youth ministry? _____

4. What gifts, skills, aptitudes, and/or special training do you possess which is applicable to this position? _____

5. What age range do you desire to serve?

☐ Nursery (0-1) ☐ Toddler (2-4) ☐ Elementary (K-5) ☐ Middle (6-8) ☐ High (9-12) ☐ Other _____

APPLICATION PERSONAL INFORMATION

6. Are you? ☐ Single ☐ Married ☐ Widowed ☐ Divorced ☐ Other _____ 7. DOB _____

8. Do you have children? NO _____ YES _____ Ages/Gender _____

9. Are there any circumstances or patterns in your life that may make it inappropriate for you to work with children?

(Please share any psychiatric disorder; personal or family history of sexual abuse; etc.)

NO _ YES, please explain

10. Have you ever been arrested for, convicted of, or pleaded guilty to a crime?

NO _ YES, please explain

11. Have you ever been suspected, accused, charged, or alleged to have, or have you ever committed an act of neglecting, abusing or molesting a child?

NO__YES, please explain

12. Are you a member of St. Athanasius Orthodox Church? NO _____ YES _____ Since? Month _____ Year _____

REFERENCES *(Please provide three personal references.)*

1. Name _____ Email _____
Phone _____ Relationship _____
2. Name _____ Email _____
Phone _____ Relationship _____
3. Name _____ Email _____
Phone _____ Relationship _____

Please list any previous addresses you have had in the past 7 years:

PREVIOUS ADDRESS	CITY, STATE, ZIP	COUNTY
PREVIOUS ADDRESS	CITY, STATE, ZIP	COUNTY
PREVIOUS ADDRESS	CITY, STATE, ZIP	COUNTY

APPLICATION APPLICANT'S STATEMENT

The information contained in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge. I authorize any references or churches listed in this application to give any information (including opinions) they have regarding my character and fitness for work with children. I authorize the release of information contained in this application to any ministry of St. Athanasius Orthodox Church in which I seek a volunteer position. In consideration of the receipt and evaluation of this application I, _____ hereby release any individual, church, children's organization, charity, employer, reference, or any other person or organization, including records custodian, both collectively and individually, from any and all liability for damages of whatever kind or nature which may at any time result to me, my heirs, or family, on the account of compliance or any attempts to comply, with this authorization. I waive any right that I may have to inspect any information provided about me by any person or organization identified by me in this application. Should my application be accepted, I agree to refrain from poor conduct in the performance of my services on behalf of the church. I further state that I HAVE CAREFULLY READ THE FORGOING RELEASE AND KNOW THE CONTENTS THEREOF AND SIGN THIS RELEASE OF MY OWN FREE ACT. This is a legally binding agreement which I have read and understand.

Applicant's Signature _____ Date _____

Date Application Received_____	OFFICIAL USE
_____Date Reference 1 Confirmed	
_____Date Reference 2 Confirmed	
_____Date Reference 3 Confirmed	
_____Date Background Check Completed	
_____Date Completed Application Reviewed	
Child Safety Committee Recommendation:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Denied <input type="checkbox"/> Provisional <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
Date Applicant Informed of Status_____	
Date Child Safety Training Completed:_____	

Acknowledgement of Policies & Procedures for St. Athanasius Orthodox Church

I HAVE RECEIVED AND READ A COPY OF THE CURRENT (rev. 8/2021) POLICIES AND PROCEDURES HANDBOOK FOR CHILD SAFETY, *AS WELL AS THE ABBREVIATED PSP'S OF THE OCA ON SEXUAL MISCONDUCT (2017)*, AND UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MATTERS SET FORTH IN THE DOCUMENTS. I AGREE TO FOLLOW AND ABIDE BY THESE GUIDELINES DURING MY MINISTRY SERVICE AT ST. ATHANASIUS. I understand that the PCP's may be modified and guidelines may be amended, revised, or eliminated at any time. Also, I acknowledge that I am applying as a volunteer and will receive no compensation for my time.

Printed Name

Signature

Date

CHILD SAFETY Policies & Procedures HANDBOOK

Strategy 1: Worker Selection

The following screening procedures will be used with all employees, volunteers, and anyone serving in the church that will have any contact with minors, including all attached priests and deacons, subdeacons, and readers, altar-servers (those scheduled to serve regularly), choir directors, Sunday School teachers, youth group leaders, and designated chaperones for youth functions.

1.1 The screening process includes an application, interview, and reference checks. The reference check and interview may be exempted if the applicant has been a member of the parish more than 2 years, but the parish priest must sign an exemption form to be placed in the volunteer's file. A volunteer for child/youth ministry is required to a parish member in good standing, have the blessing of the priest, and must have attended the parish for at least one year prior to volunteering.

1.2 All applications and background records will be reviewed and retained in a confidential file administered by the Church Office staff and members of the Child Safety Committee (CSC). The CSC includes four members (at least), one of whom shall be a member of the Parish Council. Members are to be appointed by the Parish Council each summer and will be introduced to the parish community at the September Annual Parish Meeting, and will serve for the duration of the Sunday School year (fall and spring).

1.3 Background Checks are required every three years for all child/youth volunteers and everyone who has a position of responsibility that brings them into more than casual contact with minors including clergy, readers, altar servers, teachers, choir directors. These background checks are administered by the OCA Diocese of the South.

1.4 All volunteers and church workers will be required to participate in a video-based online training "Stewards of Children" that is provided by the OCA every 3 years. Certificates showing fulfillment of this step will be kept in the Church Office in cooperation with the Child Safety Committee.

1.5 Applicants will be given access to a copy of this handbook (either in hard-copy form or online) which they are required to read/review and sign an acknowledgement form that he/she understands the material and agrees to comply with the program requirements.

1.6 The general rule is that volunteer applicants will only be permitted to work with youth or children after they have been regularly attending the parish for at least one year and have the blessing of the priest. With the blessing of the priest, exceptions may be made for the purpose of hiring outside childcare for special events.

1.7 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 plead 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.

Strategy 2: Worker Supervision

2.1 St. Athanasius Orthodox Church **has a zero tolerance** for abuse in child/youth ministries. It is the responsibility of every parishioner/volunteer to act in the best interest of children and youth at all times. 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.

2.2 Each school year the youth group member and their parents must complete a Youth Group Consent Form (see pages 12-13) that is kept on file in the church office,

2.3 When transporting children/youth, drivers cannot be minors, must be reasonably older than those being transported, must not have adverse driving records, and may never be alone in the car with only one minor in the car, *unless it is their child*. Church volunteers who drive youth/children will receive a higher-level driving-related background screening.

2.4 Discipline: It is the policy of St. Athanasius Orthodox church that staff and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any manner for behavioral management of children. No form of physical discipline is acceptable.....this includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, biting or any other physical force as retaliation or correction of inappropriate behaviors by children. Time-outs are acceptable methods of behavior management.

2.5 Intoxicants: Volunteers and staff are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drug while supervising any child/youth programs or activities.

2.6 Medication: Volunteers may not administer medication to any child or youth.

2.7 Nudity: Volunteers/staff should never be nude in the presence of children in their care. In the event there is a situation that may call for or contemplate the possibility of nudity (changing clothes during pool party, weekend or overnight retreat, etc) the staff member/volunteer leading the event will submit a plan to the Rector concerning arrangements for showering/changing clothes.

2.8 One-to-one Interaction with children: Staff/Volunteers should never conduct one-to-one, unobserved meetings or interactions with minors while participating in child/youth activities. Another trained and screened adult should always be present if not in a public space.

2.9 Physical Contact: St. Athanasius is committed to protecting children and has implemented a *physical contact policy* that promotes a positive, nurturing, environment.

- Hugging, pats on the back and other forms of appropriate physical affection between volunteers and children are important for their development and are generally suitable in the church setting.
- Inappropriate touching or displays of affection are forbidden. Any inappropriate physical contact, touching, or display of affection should be immediately reported to the Rector or a child safety committee member.
- Physical contact should be for the benefit of the child, and never be based on the emotional needs of the volunteer.
- 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).
- Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. The personal behavior of volunteers with minors must foster trust at all times. Personal conduct must be above reproach.
- 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.
- Volunteers/staff are responsible for protecting children under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others.
- Any inappropriate behavior or suspected abuse must be reported immediately to the Rector or a child safety committee member.

2.10 Sexually Explicit Conversations: Staff/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.

2.11 Sexually Explicit Materials: Staff/volunteers are prohibited from possessing (or transmitting to a child) any sexually explicit or pornography materials (magazines, cards, images, videos, films, etc) on church property or in the presence of children in their care.

2.12 Tobacco Use: Volunteers/staff must abstain from using during children's or youth activities/programs.

Strategy 3: Reporting Obligations

3.1 **Definition of Child Sexual Abuse:** 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.

KRS 629.030 DUTY TO REPORT DEPENDENCY, NEGLECT, OR ABUSE

Any person who know or has reasonable cause to believe that a child is dependent, neglected, or abused shall immediately cause an oral or written report to be ade 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 or county attorney, the cabinet or its designated representative within forty-eight (48) hours of the original report a written report containing:

1. *The names and addresses of the child and his/her parents or other persons exercising custodial control or supervision;*
2. *The child's age;*
3. *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/her siblings;*
4. *The name and address of the person allegedly responsible for the abuse or neglect;*
5. *Any other information that the person making the report believes may be helpful in the furtherance of the purpose of this section.*

3.2 All allegations or suspected incidents of child sexual abuse will be taken seriously and reported immediately to the Rector. (For incidents involving the Rector see 3.3.) The Rector will report immediately to the proper diocesan authority, the bishop's office, (<http://dosoca.org/administration.html>).

- ★ The reporter is to complete an Incident Report Form, available online or in the Church Office and submit it to the Rector.
- ★ Upon receipt of an Incident Report Form, the Rector 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 620.030 (see above).
- ★ 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 and confirmation that the report was received will be requested with either: 1) a fax with transmittal sheet 2) email, or 3) a certified letter w/return receipt in reference to the call reporting the alleged incident. (E.g.: "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.

3.3 *For incidents involving the Rector* If an allegation of sexual abuse is made against the Rector, the person making the allegation should instead notify the bishop's office (<http://dosoca.org/administration.html>) and the Parish Warden. The reporter is to complete an Incident Report Form available online or in the church office and give it to the Parish Warden, who 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 3.2 above.

3.4 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, if Rector under suspicion) may also contact the OCA Office of Review of Sexual Misconduct and Allegations (ORSMA) for counsel about appropriate action.

3.5 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.

3.6 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.

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

Strategy 4: Response to Allegations

4.1 In the event that the Diocesan Hierarchy is notified of an allegation or charge of misconduct pursuant to Section 3.2 or 3.3 above, the Diocesan Hierarchy may inform the Office of the Metropolitan. In such an event, if deemed necessary the Metropolitan will appoint a trained investigator to the case, who will also serve as adviser to the Metropolitan and the Diocesan Hierarchy in regard to issues surrounding the matter.

4.2 A spokesperson able to speak to the media and the congregation in a discreet, 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.

regarding and allegation or charge of misconduct. The privacy and confidentiality of all involved will be carefully safeguarded.

4.3 After reviewing the written allegations with legal counsel, the Office of the Metropolitan and the Diocesan Hierarch 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 Hierarch 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.

Reference/Interview Exemption Form

(must be signed by parish rector and kept in file in church office)

I, _____, as Parish Rector certify that

_____, (Volunteer Name) has previously worked with

children in the capacity of _____ at

(name of parish)_____for _____years.

As his/her priest and confessor, I can attest to the individual's ability and character to work with minors.

Rector Signature_____Date_____

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: _____

NAMES OF CHILDREN/YOUTH INVOLVED	AGE

COMMENTS:

ST. ATHANASIUS ORTHODOX CHURCH YOUTH ACTIVITIES CONSENT FORM 2021

(use back of page or another page as required)

- Name of youth:
- Birth date:
- Name of parent(s) or guardian(s):
- Address:
- Parent(s) phone:
- Youth phone:
- 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 while at a youth ministry event? (Please Circle)
Yes No
- 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: _____

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.

**** Please also include a copy of your insurance card ****

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. **Yes No**

I, the undersigned, authorize the Youth Leaders of St Athanasius Orthodox Church to post the photos from the church sanctioned youth activity on social media. **Yes No**

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

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 process¹:

- The volunteer should be in good standing in the church and have been a consistent member of the parish for at least one year.
- **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 oca.org/about/sexual-misconduct.
- **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.
- **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.
- **Criminal history background check²**
- **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.

¹ **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.

² 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.

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 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 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.

**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 Signature/Date_____

Child Safety Committee Member Signature/Date_____

Child Safety Committee Member Signature/Date_____

Child Safety Committee Member Signature/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.

Addendum to Child Safety Policy of St. Athanasius Orthodox Church
Regarding Anti-Bullying

St. Athanasius Orthodox Church will not tolerate any behavior that is classified under the definition of bullying, and to the extent that such actions are disruptive, we take steps needed to eliminate such behavior.

Bullying is defined as aggressive behavior that is intentional, repeated over time, and involves an imbalance of power or strength. Bullying can take various forms including:

- physical bullying--when someone engages in physical force against another person by hitting, punching, pushing, kicking, pinching, or restraining another.
- Verbal bullying--when someone uses their words to hurt another by belittling or calling another hurtful names.
- Nonverbal or relational bullying--when someone manipulates a relationship or desired relationship to harm another person. This includes social exclusion, friendship manipulation, or gossip. This type of bullying also includes intimidating another person by using gestures.
- Cyberbullying--when someone uses technological tools such as email, instant messaging, text messaging, photo messaging, or social media to:
 - send mean, vulgar, or threatening messages or images.
 - post sensitive or private information about another person.
 - pretend to be someone else in order to entrap another or hurt another person.
 - intentionally to exclude someone from an online group.
 - engage in hazing--that is, expecting a newcomer to participate in or receive humiliation or degradation to become part of the group.
 - sexually manipulate or bully another person. This might include sexting, pressure to engage in sexting, exposing body parts online, and sexual innuendo.

Staff and volunteers are to be mindful that anyone who sees an act of bullying, and who then encourages it, implicitly participates in the act of bullying.

Added to Policies & Procedures for Child/Youth Ministry Handbook (October, 2022).

Approved by Parish Council on 10/24/2022.