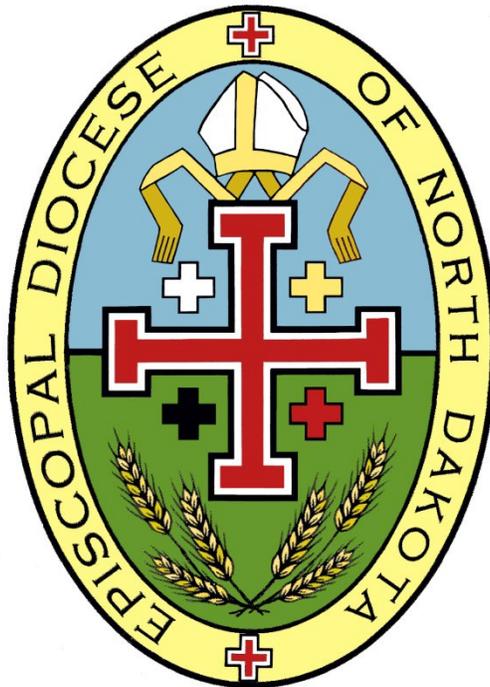


Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota Policy for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults



EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF NORTH DAKOTA

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Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota

Policy for the Protection of

Vulnerable Adults

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I. Theological and Ethical Foundations

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld the Word’s glory, glory as of the only Child from God.”

- John 1:14 (*An Inclusive Language Lectionary*)

God expressed the fullness of humanity in Jesus of Nazareth, whom we worship as the Word made flesh. To be human is to live with God and the whole of creation in the fullness of freedom and the challenge of responsibility. The pattern of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection resonates unreservedly with God’s call to perfect freedom and responsibility. In baptism, God, speaking through the Church, claims us in Christ. We become in Christ the community of God’s final purpose: justice and peace, love and plenty for the whole creation. This new community lives in Eucharistic fellowship with God and Creation, as a sign and instrument of God’s reconciling purpose in the world.

The Church is called to embody and advance God’s mission. Ministry is the vocation of the whole community: laypersons, deacons, priests, and bishops who together represent Christ and the Church in the world.

The obligation to seek and serve Christ in all persons and to respect the dignity of every human being is binding for all the baptized. The authority with which **leaders** – ordained persons and adults who minister with **vulnerable adults** – are entrusted, creates an inherent power imbalance in the **pastoral relationship**. This power imbalance derives from the leadership role and, in the case of clergy, the symbolic authority of an ordained person. Christian leadership is intended to provide occasions for guidance and grace, and its abuse is always and unequivocally wrong.

Ministry involves a necessary tension between a Gospel-based integrity and a Gospel-based intimacy as modeled by the life of Christ. A rigid adherence to a system of rules leads to an unproductive legalism. Yet, without the framework of the law, the intimate relationships into which Christ calls us risk distortion and harm. All the people of God are called to minister attentively within this tension. These policies are intended to provide a pattern for attentive practice of ministry.

This document is a statement for The Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota, setting forth expectations for its leaders in their relationships with children and youth. The purpose of this policy is to foster the highest standards of behavior in ministry settings. The document includes:

- *Screening and Training Protocols* [Appendix A (A-1 and A-2)], which explains the screening and training required before engaging in ministry with children and youth;
- *Recommended Practices and Guidelines for Social Media and Electronic Communications for Children and Youth* (Appendix B);
- *Forms* (Appendix C); and
- *Mandated Reporting* (Appendix D).

II. Expectations and Local Implementation

This diocesan policy sets forth statements of general expectations and guidelines of behavior for ordained and lay people in the church when engaged in ministry with vulnerable adults. This policy is mandated for all such activities sponsored by every congregation, institution, organization, school, and agency of this diocese. The purpose of these policies is to create safe and welcoming space for all vulnerable adults and those engaged in ministry with vulnerable adults, and to prevent sexual abuse.

This policy offers best practices for creating such safe space in the Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota and is in effect for all congregations and local/diocesan entities. We recognize, however, that in some cases, local circumstances may make some of these best practices difficult to implement or even unworkable. In such cases congregations and local/diocesan entities may adapt this policy, but no provisions in it may be completely omitted. Developing adaptations requires that local leadership understand this policy thoroughly enough to make appropriate judgments about local circumstances. **Any additions or revisions must be submitted in writing to the Diocesan Office and be approved by the bishop.**

No policy can foresee every possible circumstance to which it may be applied. Whenever applicable, questions of civil, criminal, and/or ecclesiastical discipline and employment offenses should be addressed with the relevant authorities immediately. Please contact the Diocesan Office for consultation and resources if assistance is needed.

III. Definitions

NOTE: These definitions reflect the current understanding of terms describing gender identity and sexuality, which are evolving as these policies are being adopted.

Adult: Anyone who is 18 years or older and not in high school. ¹

Adult Protective Services: A social services program provided by state and local governments serving vulnerable adults and their families who are in need of assistance. Adult Protective Services receive and investigate reports of suspected abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

Bullying: Behavior that intimidates, humiliates, offends, degrades, or harms another person, whether verbal, psychological, social, physical, or otherwise.

Cisgender: An adjective describing a person whose sense of personal identity and gender corresponds with their gender or sex assigned at birth. This is an evolving term, as our understanding and language around gender identity and sexuality expands and matures.

Gender Non-Binary: An umbrella term for people who identify their gender as neither male nor female. These people might identify as both (“bigender”), neither (“agender”), a mix between the two (“genderfluid”), or they can be unsure of their gender (“genderqueer”). This is an evolving term, as our understanding and language around gender identity and sexuality expands and matures.

Intake Officer: The person(s) designated by each diocese to receive information regarding an offense for which a member of the clergy may be held accountable under *Title IV of the Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church*, which sets out the disciplinary process for clergy. Anyone may contact an Intake Officer to report their concerns. The contact information for Intake Officer(s) in the Diocese of North Dakota can be found on the Diocesan Website.

LGBTQ+: An acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, and others. It refers to people whose gender identities vary from their gender or sex assigned at birth, or whose sexual orientations differ from the heterosexual majority. The “+” is an effort to include additional gender identities. This is an evolving term, as our understanding and language around gender identity and sexuality expands and matures.

Leader: A person who, for the benefit of another, engages in ministry without responsibility for oversight of other adults engaged in that same ministry. Examples include: Eucharistic Visitors and members of pastoral care teams.

¹ Ages established in accordance with generally accepted definitions in the United States. These ages may vary across the wider Episcopal Church.

Mandated Reporter: A person who is required by state law to report reasonable suspicions of abuse, neglect and/or exploitation of vulnerable populations to the appropriate state agency. State laws vary greatly. Generally, state law mandates that either all adults or adults in certain professions report suspected abuse of elders, vulnerable, and/or dependent adults. It is imperative to know the requirements of applicable North Dakota or Clay County, Minnesota laws. Typically, individuals who are not mandated to report suspicion of abuse may make a report to the appropriate state agency, even though they are not legally required to do so.

Off-site: Any location other than the sponsoring Episcopal church or institutional facility or campus.

Organizations: All institutions for which the diocese or congregations have legal or fiduciary responsibility (examples: diocesan departments, commissions, conference & retreat centers, adult day care centers, retirement communities, religious orders, congregations, schools, etc.).

Overnight: Any event that starts on one calendar day and ends on a different calendar day.

Pastoral Relationship: Any relationship (1) between a Member of the Clergy and any person to whom the Member of the Clergy provides or has provided counseling, pastoral care, spiritual direction, or spiritual guidance, or from whom such Member of the Clergy has received information within the Rite of Reconciliation of a Penitent, or (2) between a lay minister and any person to whom the lay minister is offering prayer, ministry, and/or any person from whom the lay minister has received sensitive, personal, or confidential information in the course of offering ministry.

Programs: Official activities and programs sponsored by the Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota and its entities and congregations.

Public Record Check: A search of documents and data available to the public including criminal and civil court records, credit reports, and driving records from the department of motor vehicles. Searches will be done via the provider approved by the diocese.

Residential Facility: Any institutional or group home setting where a vulnerable adult resides on a permanent or temporary basis such as a nursing home, rehabilitation center, assisted living facility, treatment center, or memory care facility.

Responsible Person: The person designated as being accountable for compliance with this policy for an event or program; in some cases, the responsible person may also be the supervisor (see below).

Sacramental Use: Consecrated or unconsecrated wine used in the setting of Eucharist.

Supervisor: A person who has oversight responsibilities for a ministry program and/or leaders in a ministry program.

Title IV: A section of the *Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church* pertaining to clergy professional standards, accountability, and ecclesiastical discipline.

Training: Organized activity designed to provide information and/or instructions to strengthen and enhance the recipient's understanding, capacity, and exercise of ministry.

- **Universal Training:** A standard of training that will foster a culture of safety and inclusion for all people that includes a broad overview of issues of vulnerability, power, and healthy boundaries. This training is designed to equip all people to live out their Baptismal Covenant.
- **Specialized Training:** A standard of additional training that equips people who participate in or have oversight responsibility for ministries. In addition to Universal Training, a person will have access to training that is specialized and tailor to their role and ministry function.

Transgender: An adjective describing a person whose sense of personal identity and gender does not correspond with the gender or sex assigned to them at birth. This is an evolving term, as our understanding and language around gender identity and sexuality expands and matures.

Vulnerable Adult:

- Any adult who is infirm or diminished in capacity due to age, illness, or disability;
- Any adult who is ministered to in their home (by Eucharistic Visitors, Pastoral Care Visitors, Stephen Ministers, or others);
- Any adult who is wholly or partially dependent upon one or more other persons for emotional, psychological, or physical care or support, such dependency may be temporary as in the case of an accident, illness, or birth of a child; and
- Any adult who by virtue of a crisis, experiences vulnerability leading to dependency on another or lacks agency in a pastoral relationship as in the wake of death of a family member or job loss.

IV. Application and Screening

The Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota, its congregations, and other entities are required to screen all persons according to the standards in the *Screening and Training Protocols* (Appendix A-1). For some positions, screening consists only of a Public Records Check. For other positions there are additional screening requirements for a written application, interview, and reference verification.

A. Public Records Checks

- Congregations and other organizations shall use a provider approved by the diocese (contact Diocesan Office OR see diocesan web page). Such checks must be completed before the employee or volunteer begins programmatic interacting with children and youth;
- Criminal public records checks shall include all available criminal records and sex offender registries;
- A Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) records check is needed for those transporting vulnerable adults as part of, or an extension of, ministry of the church or for a church-sponsored event;
- A credit check is required for treasurers and those with check signing authority; and
- Public records checks must be updated at least every five years.

B. Additional Screening Requirements

Written application, interview, and reference verification are required before serving in certain roles and ministries as specified in the *Screening and Training Protocols* (Appendix A-1). Where required, these components are generally conducted in the following order:

- Submission of a completed written application to serve in a specified role with a clearly defined, written “job description.” The application includes verifiable personal information (see Appendix C);
- Personal interview;
- Reference verification conducted by congregations and other organizations to verify personal information and check references listed in the application (people who know but are not related to the applicant); and
- Maintenance of these records as described below.

Potential leaders or supervisors **must be known and active in the congregation for at least six months before engaging in ministry with vulnerable adults** unless they are required to have public records checks and reference checks pursuant to the *Screening and Training Protocols* (Appendix A-1).

The Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota, its congregations, and other entities will keep and maintain all application and screening records secure and confidential in the diocese, church, and/or organization's office. Verification of those who read the policies will be tracked via Praesidium or through diocesan record keeping practices. This will also include any local procedures or variations (providing copies of local adaptations that have been approved by the bishop is the responsibility of the local entity).

V. Education and Training

Training shall be appropriate to each person's function according to the *Screening and Training Protocols* (Appendix A-2).

All Leaders shall have Universal Training that fosters a culture of safety and inclusion for all people and covers a broad overview of issues of vulnerability, power, and healthy boundaries. Universal Training is designed to equip all people to live out their Baptismal Covenant. All members of the Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota shall have access to this training.

In addition to Universal Training, all Supervisors and those with oversight responsibilities for ministry programs and/or other adults who engage in ministry with Vulnerable Adults shall have Specialized Training that is tailored to their role and ministry function.

Depending on role and responsibility, Specialized Training should include:

- The prevention, identification, and response to all forms of abuse and neglect, including financial exploitation;
- Mandated and voluntary reporting of suspected abuse, neglect, and exploitation of vulnerable adults;
- Vulnerability within the pastoral relationship;
- An introduction to gender non-binary;
- The needs of aging LGBTQ+ individuals who often struggle to find care or residential facilities adequately equipped to meet their needs; and
- The ways that vulnerable adults can engage in self-advocacy.

Certification of training shall be renewed every three years.

The Diocese, its congregations, and other entities with responsibility for programs with, or services or ministries to, vulnerable adults shall keep records sufficient to demonstrate compliance with this policy.

VI. Monitoring and Supervision of Programs

All people who minister to vulnerable adults and/or have pastoral relationships with others must have ongoing supervision. Ongoing supervision should consist of regular check-ins by the *Supervisor* who may be a member of the clergy serving the congregation, a Warden, or a team leader known to the Vestry. Such supervision shall review the scope, accountability, and responsibility of the ministry with the person engaged in the ministry. Each person engaged in such ministry should know who supervises their ministry and how to contact the Supervisor at all times.

The Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota, its entities and congregations shall ensure that all people who minister to vulnerable adults receive prior training as to the scope, accountability, and responsibility of the ministry.

The Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota, its entities and congregations shall maintain an up-to-date list of persons with their contact information approved to minister to vulnerable adults and/or engage in pastoral relationships with others. This list shall be kept in the organization's office or other place where records are kept.

As a best practice, those ministering to vulnerable adults should **document their visits**, including time, place, and any observations or concerns. Such documentation is reviewed by the Supervisor. Confidentiality among clergy and lay ministers is required and all documentation is kept confidential. This documentation promotes continuity of care and transparency in ministry.

All new activities that include pastoral relationships and/or ministry to vulnerable adults shall have a *Responsible Person* to monitor and supervise all events to ensure appropriate behavior and healthy boundaries.

A. Presence of Unrelated Adults Suggested

While not required, the best practice for those ministering to vulnerable adults, or in the homes of others, is to do so with another trained adult minister present. Those engaged in such ministries should minister in pairs.

If the diocesan or a local congregation's policy requires that there be two unrelated adults present, and if circumstances result in a minister being alone with a vulnerable adult, that minister shall report this to the Supervisor, clergy, senior warden, or Responsible Person as soon as possible.

B. Creating Safe Space for Pastoral Relationships and/or Ministry with Vulnerable Adults

To create a safe space, it is necessary to anticipate and avoid circumstances that could result in exposure of vulnerable adults to undue influence or exploitation. On-site and off-site settings for ministry with vulnerable adults and pastoral relationships and conversations should:

- Be in places where casual monitoring by others is convenient; and
- Convey safety and comfort.

C. Inclusiveness

No one shall be denied rights, status, or access to an equal place in the life, worship, and governance of any program or activity because of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, differing abilities, socio-economic class, or age. To the extent possible, all spaces and setting for program, activities and ministry shall be accessible.

The Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota, its entities and congregations seek to support all persons by providing reasonable alternative arrangements regardless of state law to address safety and comfort.

Transgender, genderqueer, or gender non-binary adults who express the need or desire for increased privacy should be provided with reasonable alternative arrangements. Reasonable alternative arrangements may include the use of a private area, or a separate changing schedule, or use of a single-stall restroom. Any alternative arrangement should be provided in a way that protects the adult's ability to keep their transgender status confidential, if they so desire.

Transgender, genderqueer, or gender non-binary adults should not be required to use a locker room or restroom that conflicts with their gender identity. Safe bathroom/shower facilities will be provided by gender (or specific times will be assigned for the use of a single facility).

D. Violence

- No one is to strike, hit, or otherwise physically threaten or harm anyone at any time.
- No one is to control or attempt to control another by bullying, intimidation, threats, verbal/emotional abuse, or isolation from others. Bullying of any kind by anyone is prohibited.
- Report suspected violations immediately. See *Suspected Violations of this Policy* (Section VII, B).

E. Behavioral Standards for Ministry with Vulnerable Adults

All who work with vulnerable adults are expected to model the patterns of healthy relationships. To this end, lay and ordained ministers working with vulnerable adults shall:

- Take care not to unduly influence a person to whom they minister;
- Accept only token gifts from those to whom they minister. Ministers given gifts shall report those gifts in writing to their Supervisor, clergy, senior warden, or Responsible Person;
- Decline to accept loans of any kind from those to whom they minister;
- Decline to agree to be named as a beneficiary or to act as an administrator or executor in a will of anyone to whom they minister; and
- Inform Supervisor, clergy, senior warden, or Responsible Person of anything that causes concern for the safety or wellbeing of those to whom they minister.

DOs: All who minister to vulnerable adults are encouraged to:

- Have ongoing spiritual practices, which might include daily prayer, regular participation in corporate worship, and Bible study;
- Spend time with and listen to vulnerable adults, and advocate for their ministry within the Body of Christ;
- Offer appropriate physical expressions of affection, as long as they are welcomed by the recipient. These may include:
 - brief hugs;
 - pats on the shoulder or back;
 - kisses on the cheek;
 - handshakes;
 - holding hands during prayer; and
- Maintain healthy boundaries when sharing personal information.

DON'Ts: Adults shall not under any circumstances:

- Provide vulnerable adults with non-sacramental alcohol, marijuana, illegal drugs, cigarettes, e-cigarettes, vapes, or pornography;
- Arrive under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or misuse of legal drugs when they are responsible for, or ministering to, a vulnerable adult;
- Consume non-sacramental alcohol or illegal drugs or misuse legal drugs when they are responsible for, or ministering to, a vulnerable adult;
- Engage in illegal behavior or permit others to engage in illegal behavior; or
- Engage in any sexual, romantic, illicit, or secretive relationship or conduct with any vulnerable adult.

F. Visits to Private Residences

The safety of all persons and healthy boundaries are essential when visiting a vulnerable adult in a private home.

- Avoid situations that might compromise privacy; common examples include:
 - Visiting behind closed bedroom doors;
 - Sitting on the bed of the person being visited; or
 - Visiting a person while they are not fully clothed.
- The best practice is to visit in teams of two or more. If it is not possible for another adult minister to be present, a member of the vulnerable adult’s household should be present. If neither is possible, documentation of the time, duration of visit, general matters discussed, and any pastoral concerns shall be provided to the Supervisor as soon as possible after the visit.

G. Visits to Residential Facilities

The safety of all persons and healthy boundaries are also essential when visiting a vulnerable adult in a Residential Facility. Best practices include:

- Facility staff should be informed of the visitor’s presence;
- If a visit takes place out of sight of staff, they should be notified in advance and informed when such meeting is concluded;
- The door to a resident’s private room must remain open during visits;
- Visitors should be mindful that LGBTQ+ residents may not be safe to express their sexual identity or orientation, as staff members may not yet have been trained; and
- In the event of uncertainty about application of this policy, the visitor is encouraged to contact their Supervisor with the relevant queries.

H. Off-Site Visits, Events, and Programs

Off-site programs, trips, and events are a welcome and often necessary means for spiritual, social, and emotional wellbeing of vulnerable adults. They also present additional challenges for maintaining best practices for safe and healthy ministry. The expectations for safe space, as described above, should be observed off-site.

In the event of uncertainty about application of this policy, the Responsible Person should contact their Supervisor with the relevant questions/concerns.

Because of the unique risks that can’t always be anticipated, it is important to obtain permissions and manage documentation as described below.

1. Prior Approvals

- a. Prior approval by the governing body and the member of the clergy in charge is required, and that approval shall be reflected in the minutes of the governing body. Diocesan sponsored programs, trips, or events shall receive prior diocesan approval.
- b. These same prior approvals are required when the site is a private residence, hosting such events as cook outs, progressive dinners, etc.

In the event of uncertainty, the Responsible Person should contact the Diocesan Office with the relevant information.

2. Registration, Waivers, and Release Forms (Appendix C)

- a. Due to the unique risks of off-site visits, events, and programs that cannot always be anticipated, obtaining permissions and managing documentation as described below are important:
 - i. All participants shall complete and sign a registration, waiver, and release **before participating in any program**. Confidentiality must be preserved with respect to medical information.
 - ii. There must be a signature on all release and waiver forms. If a person is unable to consent due to impairment or lack of agency, then the signature of that person's guardian, spouse, or other trusted family member is required. Applicable state law determines whether digital signatures are acceptable.
 - iii. Completed release and waiver forms shall be maintained in a secure location on-site. Check with the Diocesan Office regarding whether such forms may be saved electronically and how long they must be retained.
 - b. Permission slips shall be provided for each event and shall be signed by the vulnerable adult, guardian, spouse, or other trusted family member.
 - c. Prior permission for an individual to be photographed or recorded on film, videotape, audiotape, or other electronic media is required.
- ## **3. First Aid and Medications**
- Current certification in First Aid, CPR, and Automated External Defibrillator (AED) is strongly encouraged for those who work with vulnerable adults.
- a. A first aid kit, appropriately stocked for the event and participants, shall be available in an easily accessible location.
 - b. If a vulnerable adult requires assistance with medications of any type, then a record must be kept for all medication or first aid given to a participant. This record shall include the participant's name, the date and time of service, the name of the person administering medication or treatment, and a description of the medication, dosage and/or treatment given.
 - c. All medications (prescription and over the counter) belonging to vulnerable adults requiring assistance with medications shall be given to the Responsible Person, unless otherwise agreed upon.
 - d. Only the Responsible Person, or their adult designee, shall administer medications.

I. Transportation

For the health and safety of all participants, the following practices shall be followed:

- For the health and safety of all participants, the following practices shall be followed: For events that originate and/or terminate at the diocesan, congregation, or organization's facility, all drivers must be AT least 18 years of age, no longer in high school, have proof of insurance and a current driver's license, have completed a volunteer driver information form, and have a satisfactory DMV records check. The best practice is for all drivers to be at least 21 years of age;
- A list of those approved to provide transportation to vulnerable adults shall be maintained in the office of the organization;
- Anyone being transported must consent to such transportation beforehand. If a person is unable to consent due to impairment or lack of agency, then prior approval by that person's guardian, spouse, or other trusted family member is required; and
- All drivers and riders must comply with state laws including seat belt and cell phone usage.

J. Insurance for Overseas Pilgrimages and Mission Trips

- Short-term trip or supplemental insurance, available through most church and organization's policies as an added rider, must be secured at least one month prior to travel.
- It is recommended that all travelers carry evidence of personal health insurance by virtue of a copy of the actual card provided to the insured person.
- Because not all individuals have access to affordable and adequate health insurance, it is recommended that health insurance be added to trip insurance.

K. International Considerations

- Check in with the U.S. Department of State on travel requirements, including visas.
- Make certain that every traveler's passport is valid for at least six months beyond your return date.
- Determine whether or not vaccinations are required and/or recommended for entry into specific countries.
- Arrange to have at least two cell phones with the group that will have active coverage in your destination(s). Make a back-up plan for communication with your Responsible Person at home.

L. Conference and Retreat Centers

All conference and retreat centers of the diocese, congregations, and organizations shall follow the guidelines for off-site Programming established in this policy.

VII. Responding to Concerns

A. Suspected Abuse, Neglect, or Exploitation of a Vulnerable Adult

Anyone who has reason to suspect that abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a vulnerable adult has taken place, is strongly encouraged, and all mandated reporters are required, to contact North Dakota Vulnerable Adult Protective Services (<https://www.nd.gov/dhs/info/pubs/docs/aging/fact-sheet-vulnerable-adults-protective-services.pdf>)

or Clay County Adult Protection Services (<https://claycountymn.gov/177/Adult-Protection-Services>).

In addition, anyone who has reason to suspect that abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a vulnerable adult has taken place within a facility or program of the Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota, its congregations or entities should immediately inform one or more of the following:

- The bishop or the Diocesan Office in the case of a diocese;
- Member of the clergy in charge or the senior warden in the case of a congregation;
- The director, head, or other governing officer in the case of other diocesan entities; and/or
- An Intake Officer in case a member of the clergy is suspected of abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation.

B. Suspected Violations of this Policy

Anyone who suspects a violation of these policies shall immediately report the violation to the Responsible Person, member of the clergy in charge, and senior warden.

Those receiving reports of violations of this policy shall be responsible for ensuring appropriate pastoral care is available to all those affected and appropriate remedial and/or disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment or unpaid ministry with the church.

Anyone who knows of a violation of these policies by a member of the clergy shall immediately report the violation to the Diocesan Office and/or an Intake Officer. Anyone can make a report to an Intake Officer.

The bishop, hearing reports of violations by clergy, or by laity at diocesan events, shall be responsible for providing appropriate pastoral care to all those affected and appropriate remedial and/or disciplinary action, up to and including canonical disciplinary action, as provided by Title IV of the Constitutions and Canons and/or termination of employment or unpaid ministry with the diocese.

C. Local Resources for Response

The Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota, its entities and congregations provide a list of local resources (including the bishop and diocesan intake officers) that can give information and assistance to anyone concerned about circumstances that may violate this policy. These resources

with contact information can be found on the Diocesan web page in the Safe Church section. For relevant local congregational resources (such as clergy and wardens), please contact your congregational leadership.

VIII. Policy Adoption, Implementation, and Audit

A. Diocesan Adoption, Implementation, and Audit

The Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota, its entities and congregations has adopted this *Policy for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults* that is consistent with and/or exceeds the requirements in the model policy adopted by General Convention.

Site-specific variations from this diocesan policy may be made, where approved by the governing body and described in detail, including the circumstances under which those variations are to be permitted and their rationale. This approval shall be recorded in the minutes of the governing board and submitted to the Diocesan Office for the bishop's approval.

The bishop has informed congregations and other entities within the diocese of the contents of the diocesan policy, the requirement that each congregation or organization adopt a policy in accordance with the diocesan policy, and the vendor(s) approved by the diocese to conduct Public Records Checks.

The diocese will conduct a *Safe Church Self-Audit* every three years, as required, to confirm compliance with diocesan safe church policies.

Procedures to be confirmed by audit will include (but are not limited to):

- Existence of diocesan policy that is consistent with and/or exceeds the requirements of the model policy adopted by General Convention;
- Provision of accessible and appropriate training for all those who work with vulnerable adults in accordance with *Screening and Training Protocols* (Appendix A: A-2). Such training shall include, at a minimum, topics identified in this policy;
- Verification that each congregation and/or organization within the diocese has adopted a policy that is consistent with and/or exceeds the diocesan policy; and
- Verification that each congregation and/or organization has a process to ensure members access training and conduct public record checks.

B. Congregation and Organization Adoption, Implementation, and Audit

Congregations and organizations must adopt a *Policy for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults* that is consistent with and/or exceeds the requirements in this diocesan policy.

Congregations and organizations may adopt site-specific variations from diocesan policies, where permitted by vestries or governing bodies. Any variations should be described in detail, including the circumstances under which those variations are to be permitted and their rationale. **This approval shall be recorded in the minutes of the vestry or governing body.**

How to access the *Policy for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults* online shall be posted in an area where activities take place, and copies are available on the website for all adults, guardians, and all paid and unpaid persons who minister to vulnerable adults. The Diocesan webpage will have contact information for the bishop and Diocesan Office. For local leadership, please reach out to your congregation.

Each congregation and organization is required to conduct a *Safe Church Self-Audit annually* to confirm compliance with safe church policies, and to report such audit to the Diocesan Office.

Procedures to be confirmed by audit will include (but are not limited to):

- Public records checks, application forms, records of screening, and reference verification of paid and unpaid persons engaged in ministry with vulnerable adults;
- Records of compliance with *Screening and Training Protocols* (Appendix A: A-1 and A-2);
- Procedures for responding to concerns and incidents; and
- Evidence of compliance with “safe space” requirements.

Appendix A

A-1: Application and Screening

	Application & Screening					
		Public Records Checks				
R = Required	Application	DMV	Credit	Criminal Bkgrd	Interview	Reference Check
S = Suggested/recommended		(driving record)				
# = Required if paid						
* - Required if involved in active ministry						
Clergy						
Bishop	R	R		R	R	R
Priests	R	R		R	R	R
Deacons	R	R		R	R	R
Retired Clergy	*	*		*	*	*
Postulants and Candidates for Holy Orders	R	R	R	R	R	R
Seminarians	R	R		R	R	R
Children's Ministry Worker (age 18+)						
Church school/VBS teacher	R	R		R	R	R
Acolyte leader/trainer	R	R		R	R	R
Camp counselors, other staff	R	R		R	R	R
Youth Group/Confirmation leader/mentor	R	R		R	R	R
Nursery worker	R			R	R	R
Other youth-involved volunteers	R	R		R		
Lay Leadership						
Eucharistic visitors		R		R		
Eucharistic ministers						
Treasurer & related financial responsibilities	#	R	R	R	R	R
Driver - program related transportation	#	R			R	R
Other Staff						
Choir director	R	R		R	R	R
Organist	#	#		#	#	#
Administrative support	#	#		#	#	#

Off-site: Any location other than the sponsoring Episcopal church, institution, facility, or campus.

Overnight: Any event that starts on one calendar day and ends on a different calendar day.

A-2: Training

R = Required S = Suggested/recommended # = Required if paid * - Required if involved in active ministry	Universal courses				Specialty courses **					
	Introduction	Diocesan *	Healthy	Inclusion	Power &	Abuse/	Pastoral	Bullying	Anti-Harassment	
	& Theological	Policies &	Boun-		Relation-	Neglect	Relation-		Preventing	Preventing
	Background	Rules	daries		ships		ships		Sexual	Sexual
									Harassment	Harassment
								Supervisors	Workers	
Clergy										
Bishop	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	
Priests	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	
Deacons	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	
Retired Clergy	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Postulants	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	
Seminarians	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	
Children's Ministry Worker (paid/vol.)										
Church school/VBS teacher	R	R	R	R	S	R	S	R		R
Acolyte leader/trainer	R	R	R	R	S	R	S	R		R
Camp counselors, other staff	R	R	R	R	S	R	S	R		R
Youth Group/Confirmation leader/mentor	R	R	R	R	S	R	S	R		R
Nursery worker	R	R	R	R	S	R	S	R		R
Other youth-involved volunteers	R	R	R	R	S	R	S	R		R
Lay leadership										
Wardens	R	R	R	R	R	S	R	R	R	
Vestry	R	R	R	R	R	S	R	R	R	
Eucharistic visitors	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	
Eucharistic ministers	R	R	R	R	S	S	S	S	S	
Altar Guild	R	R	R	R	S	S	S	S		
Treasurer/related financial responsibilities	R	R	R	R	S	S	S	S		
Convention delegates	R	R	R	R	S	S	S	S		
Adult forum leaders	R	R	R	R	S	S	S	S		
Driver - program related transportation	R	R	R	R	S	S	S	S		
Other staff										
Choir director	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	
Organist	R	R	R	R	S	S	S	S		R
Administrative support	R	R	R	R	R	S	S	S		R
** Additional courses when available										

Appendix B: Recommended Practices and Guidelines for Social Media and Electronic Communications for Vulnerable Adults

Social media is an ever-increasing part of adult lives, and has the potential to empower ministry. Behavior in the digital sphere is never private. Posted content may be used out of context and out of the control of the originating individuals and organizations, putting them at risk. In addition, these powerfully connective tools are subject to the same dynamic of unequal power and potential for abuse that present a risk in all ministry relationships. Churches face the challenge of identifying and proactively addressing areas of potential risk in social media use in the midst of rapidly evolving technology. The following recommended practices and guidelines are designed to be a flexible template for developing policies and covenants governing the safe use of social media and digital communication in ministry settings.

This policy, albeit for the physical world, is applicable for the virtual world, as well. The best practices outlined above need to be followed in the virtual world when applicable.

General Information about Digital Communications

- All communications sent digitally (email, social networking sites or platforms, notes, texts, or posts, etc.) are NOT CONFIDENTIAL and can be shared or reposted to others.
- Interactions in the virtual world need to be transparent; that is, occurring in such a way that it is easy for others to see what actions are performed.
- In the virtual world, healthy boundaries and safe church practices must be adhered to as they are in the physical world.
- In the virtual world, “friend” can mean anyone with whom you are willing to communicate through that medium. In the physical world, “friend” can mean much more in terms of intimacy, self-disclosure, mutuality, and expectations for relationship.
- Laws regarding mandated reporting of suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation of vulnerable adults apply in the virtual world as they do in the physical world. Check your local applicable laws.

Recommended Practices and Guidelines for Church and Organizations in the Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota:

- Establish a policy that outlines professional and institutional standards for profiles and interactions on social networking sites and platforms.
- Establish a policy of transparency regarding social media account. The best practice is to have the diocese, congregation, or organization create and “own” the social media accounts representing the diocese, congregation, or organization respectively and have multiple administrators and/or supervisors with access. If personal accounts are used, a system of monitoring should be established.
- Establish a policy regarding the identification or “tagging” of individuals in online photos. For example, on Facebook, “tagging” someone in a photo or video creates a

hyperlink to that person's profile page that can be clicked by anyone. The best practice is for the diocese, congregation, or organization not to identify or "tag" individuals. The "tagging" of vulnerable adults should be discouraged. The Episcopal Diocese of ND recommends not "tagging" individuals online, of any age. Photos should not have tags, but may have first names (no last names) of individuals, if there is written permission from parents/guardians. If people so choose, they are welcome to self-tag in pictures and posts, which will then be approved by the administrator of the page. A diocese, congregation, or organization does not have a responsibility to review or monitor the personal pages or groups that are not sponsored by the diocese, congregation, or organization respectively, except as described in #2 above. The preceding statement should be included in the diocese, congregation, or organization's Social Media Policy.

- Email can be a good method of communication, and it also has the opportunity to be misunderstood. Having a clear understanding and procedure when responding to digital communication that raises concern is prudent for all. Best practices can include not responding immediately and sharing the communication with a supervisor before responding. Phone and face-to-face meetings are preferred when responding to emotionally driven communications or pastoral emergencies.
- When using photos and videos for ministry purpose, obtain a media release for each person and only post images that respect the dignity of every person depicted.
- Diocese, congregations, or organizations must inform participants when they are being videoed because church buildings are not considered public space. Signs should be posted that indicate a service or activity will be broadcast when worship services or activities are streamed or distributed on the web or via other broadcast media.

Recommended Practices and Guidelines for Vulnerable Adults

- Prudent judgement should be used in the time of day a vulnerable adult is contacted through social media. Under normal circumstances, refrain from in-person contact or engaging in conversations via phone, texts, chats, video conferences, emails, etc. before 8:00 am or after 10:00 pm, unless it's an emergency. (Asynchronous communications intended to be read later are okay.)
- Privacy settings and personal boundaries should be implemented.
 - Create and use profiles on social networking sites that meet professional and institutional standards.
 - Apply privacy settings that are consistent with all vulnerable adults, across all social networking sites and platforms. Avoid playing favorites or the appearance of playing favorites.
 - Establish a regular ongoing and consistent system of review that focuses on settings, accessible content, photos, and videos to ensure compliance with professional and institutional standards.
 - When possible, send communication (1) to entire groups, (2) on an individual's "wall," or (3) in public areas, rather than in private messages. This includes photos, images, and videos.

- Disclose **ongoing** digital pastoral communications (i.e.: e-mails, Facebook messages, texting, etc.) with a vulnerable adult to a supervisor to determine when a referral to a professional provider or resource is needed.
- Create covenants to govern digital groups, which include:
 - Appropriate and inappropriate behavior of members (bullying, pictures that depict abuse, violence, illegal activities, sexual acts, etc.) and the consequence for inappropriate behavior;
 - Who may join and/or view group activity, when participants should leave the group, and when/if the group will be disbanded;
 - Description of content that can be posted or published on the site or page;
 - Discourage “tagging” photos and videos of vulnerable adults. However, the captioning of photos and videos is permissible with appropriate written permission as described above;
 - Notification that mandatory reporting laws will be followed; and
 - Consequences for breaking the covenant.
- Delete inappropriate material posted in digital groups, address the behavior and report, if necessary, in accordance with legal and institutional requirements.
- In video calls, follow the same criteria used in telephone calls. In addition, prudent judgement regarding attire and surroundings should be observed.
- Comply with the following best practices regarding “groups” on social networking sites:
 - Have at least two unrelated administrators;
 - Use closed groups, but not “hidden” or “secret” groups, for vulnerable adults;
 - Remove any content that shows or describes inappropriate behavior outside the bounds of the established behavior covenant; and
 - Observe mandated reporting laws regarding suspected abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

Appendix C: Forms



Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota Application for Ministry with Adults, Children, and/or Youth

[This application is intended as a template and may be adapted for a particular ministry but the adaptations must be consistent for that particular ministry. Be sure to collect all information relevant to that particular ministry.]

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone #s: (home) _____ (work) _____ (cell) _____

E-mail Address _____

Emergency Contact _____

Phone # _____

Name and relationship _____

Employment History (include present and prior employers for the past ten years – add additional pages as needed)

Company name: _____

Position held: _____

Name of Supervisor and Phone # _____

Dates of employment: from _____ to present

Company name: _____

Position held: _____

Name of Supervisor and Phone # _____

Dates of employment: from _____ to _____

Company name: _____

Position held: _____

Name of Supervisor and Phone # _____

Dates of employment: from _____ to _____

Current and previous volunteer experience (include present and past experience for the past ten years – add additional pages as needed)

Organization: _____ Duties: _____

Name of Supervisor and Phone # _____

Dates: from _ to _____

(continued on next page)

Organization: _____ Duties: _____

Name of Supervisor and Phone # _____

Dates: from _ to _____

Organization: _____ Duties: _____

Name of Supervisor and Phone # _____

Dates: from _ to _____

Special interests, hobbies, and skills:

Which ministries with adults, children and/or youth are especially appealing to you?

What personal qualities, training and/or skills do you have that are relevant or appropriate for these ministries?

Why are you interested in these particular ministries?

Would you be willing and able to participate in periodic training sessions? Yes No

References: (Please provide three personal references - other than family members - who can identify your strengths and weaknesses and describe your background and ability to relate with adults.)

1. Name _____
Address _____
Home/ work/ cell phone # _____
How does this person know you? _____

2. Name _____
Address _____
Home/ work/ cell phone #s _____
How does this person know you? _____

3. Name _____
Address _____
Home/ work/ cell phone #s _____
How does this person know you? _____

Please answer the following questions; circle your response. (If any of your answers are yes, please attach another page and write a full explanation.)

Yes No 1. Have you, at any time, been involved in or accused, rightly or wrongly, of sexual abuse, neglect or mistreatment (emotional or physical) of children or youth?

Yes No 2. Have you, at any time, been involved in or accused, rightly or wrongly of sexual harassment or sexual exploitation?

Yes No 3. Have you ever been accused or convicted of possession/sales of controlled substances or of driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs?

Yes No 4. Are you using illegal drugs?

Yes No 5. Have you ever been arrested or convicted for any criminal act more serious than a traffic violation?

Yes No 6. Have you ever had a paraphiliac diagnosis (pedophilia, exhibitionism, or voyeurism)?

Yes No 7. Have you ever been asked to step away from ministry in any setting, paid or volunteer?

Yes No 8. Is there anything in your past or current life that might be a problem if we found out about it later?

Acknowledgment, Release, and Signature

To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this application is complete and accurate. I understand that providing false information is grounds for not hiring me or choosing me for a volunteer position or for my discharge if I have already been hired or chosen. I authorize any person or organization, whether or not identified in this application, to provide any information concerning my previous employment, education, credit history, driving record, criminal conviction record, sexual offender registry or other qualifications for my employment or volunteering. I also authorize [congregation] and the Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota to request and receive such information.

If hired or chosen, I agree to be bound by Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota policies and procedures, including but not limited to its Policies for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults and for the Protection of Children and Youth. I understand that these may be changed, withdrawn, added to or interpreted at any time at the Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota's sole discretion and without prior notice to me. I also understand that my employment or volunteering may be terminated, or any offer or acceptance of employment or volunteering withdrawn, at any time, with or without cause, and with or without prior notice at the option of [congregation] and the Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota, or myself.

Nothing contained in this application or in any pre-employment or pre- volunteering communication is intended to or creates a contract between myself and [congregation] and Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota employment, volunteering or the providing of any benefit.

I have read and understand the above provisions.

Signature _____

Print Name _____ Date _____

Witness Signature _____ Date _____



Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota (EVENT)

Covenant and Rules of Conduct

Attending the (EVENT) is a privilege that has been provided to each Participant. Throughout (EVENT), each Participant is called to present their best selves as members of (CONGREGATION). With this goal in mind, each Participant must agree to read, understand, and abide by the guidelines below, and participate according to their gifts.

Youth:

1. You are expected to be on time to (EVENT).
2. You are responsible for getting yourself up and to your selected activity on time.
3. When speaking in group activities, you are expected to use "I" statements and to speak only for yourself.
4. You are expected to be appropriately dressed, avoiding clothing that promotes tobacco, alcoholic, or illegal substances. Underwear and torso must be covered.
5. You are expected to be active and involved throughout the entire event, participating fully in selected activities and assigned groups.
6. You are expected to take responsibility for your needs, keeping your diocesan adult leaders informed of your whereabouts and general state of being at all times.
7. You are expected to keep yourself hydrated and fed. Meals are included in your registration fees. Snacks are at your own expense.

Additional Guidelines for Overnight Events for Youth:

1. You are expected to be in your dorm by curfew.
2. You are expected to have at least 7 hours of sleep each night.
3. You will respect the privacy of your sleeping space. Only your roommate(s) may be in your room. A common area in the dorm will be designated for socializing during free time.

Adult Leaders:

1. Adult Leaders at (EVENT) must check-in with their participants.
2. All medical situations/incidents must be reported to the leaders of (EVENT) for appropriate response, care, and documentation.
3. All disciplinary issues must be handled by leaders with the (EVENT) for appropriate response and reporting.

Responsibilities and Regulations

Community Covenant

1. Respect the dignity of every human being.
2. All participants will be responsible for damaged property.
3. Young people leaving **(EVENT)** must sign out with **(NAME)** AND must be accompanied by an adult. Under no circumstances may one adult and one young person leave the meeting/event alone.
4. No sexual behavior or sexualized or harassing speech will be allowed.
5. No use of tobacco products, alcohol, or illegal drugs is allowed.

Additional Guidelines for Overnight Events for the Community:

1. Quiet will be maintained in sleeping rooms from 11pm-7am.
2. All participants are to be in their sleeping rooms by curfew.
3. All participants will remain in their sleeping rooms from curfew until 6am.

Non-Negotiable Regulations

The following regulations also apply to all participants (young people and adults) and failure to comply will result in expulsion from the **(EVENT)** at your guardian's expense:

1. There will be no possession or use of alcohol or illegal drugs/controlled substances at any time during the event.
2. Participants are expected to respect campus property and individual property and will be held financially responsible for willful destruction of it.
3. No pets, fireworks, firearms, knives or other weapons are permitted.
4. All young people leaving the **(EVENT)** at any time must be accompanied by an adult registered at the conference. Under no circumstances may one adult and one young person leave the conference alone.

I have read and understood the Responsibilities and Regulations. I agree to abide by these regulations while I am attending the **(EVENT)**.

Participant Signature

Printed Name and Date



Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota Medical Authorization

Event: _____ Dates: _____

Event Location: _____

Participant's Name: _____ Birth Date: _____

Address: _____

Guardian's Name: _____ Home Phone: _____

Cell Phone #'s (List all): _____

Alternate Contact: _____ Phone #: _____

Medical Information:

Doctor's Name: _____

Allergies: _____

Medications: _____

Other Information: _____

Insurance Information:

I have medical insurance coverage for the above name participant.

Company: _____ Policy #: _____

Address: _____

Policy in Name of: _____

Insurance Policy I.D.: _____

I acknowledge that I do not have “medical insurance” for the above named participant and understand that we are financially responsible for all costs.

In the event of an emergency, I hereby authorize an adult leader of this activity to act as agent for me to consent to any medical, dental, or surgical treatment and care deemed necessary by a licensed medical professional. I expect to be notified as soon as possible. I acknowledge that I am financially responsible for any emergency medical or dental costs.

Parent/Guardian/Adult Participant Name (please print): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____



Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota Photo Release

I hereby grant **(CONGREGATION/EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF NORTH DAKOTA)** permission to use my likeness in a photograph or video in any and all publications, including website entries, without payment or any other consideration. I further understand and agree that these materials shall become the property of **(CONGREGATION/EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF NORTH DAKOTA)** and will not be returned to me. I hereby authorize **(CONGREGATION/EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF NORTH DAKOTA)** to edit, alter, copy, exhibit, publish, or distribute such photo or video for purposes of publicizing **(CONGREGATION/EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF NORTH DAKOTA)** programs or for any other lawful purpose. In addition, I waive the right to inspect or approve the finished product, including written or electronic copy, wherein my likeness appears. I waive any right to royalties or other compensation arising or related to the use of such photograph or video.

Participant Signature

Participant Printed Name and Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Parent/Guardian Printed Name and Date



Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota Waiver and Release

I, _____, do hereby affirm to (**church name**) that I have the legal authority to provide my consent and authorization for matters relating to the participation of _____ in the (**event name, church name, and location, event date(s)**)

Parent/Guardian Name (please print): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

WAIVER AND RELEASE

I, _____, Parent/Guardian, on behalf of ("Participant") do hereby release, waive, discharge, and covenant not to sue and agree to hold members of (**church name**), its officers, directors, employees, representatives, agents and affiliates, and the staff of (**event name**) from any and all claims, demands and actions of any and every kind directly or indirectly arising out of or relating in any respect to the participation of the Participant Minor Child in the (**event name, church name and location, event date(s)**). My waiver and release of all claims, demands, actions, and liability shall include without limitation, any injury, illness, death, property damage or loss to the Participant Minor Child which may be caused by any act, or failure to act by the staff of (**event name**) or sustained before, during or after (**event name**) unless such injury, illness, death, property damage or loss is a direct result of the willful misconduct of either the church or the staff of the (**event name**). I understand that, without limitation of the foregoing, neither the Church of (**church name**) or the (**event name**) shall be liable and each is hereby released each from all claims that may arise from loss or damage to the ("Participant")'s personal property or the interruption of the (**event name**) for whatever reason. Neither the Church of (**church name**) nor (**event name**) shall be responsible for any lost or stolen property of the ("Participant") or any persons attending day activities thereof.

Parent/Guardian Name (please print): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix D: Mandated Reporting

MANDATORY REPORTING

Abuse and Neglect of a Vulnerable Adult

Who Must Report: Mandated Reporters in North Dakota

North Dakota law requires certain types of professionals who provide healthcare or services to a vulnerable adult to report abuse, neglect, and exploitation of vulnerable adults. See [2017 North Dakota Senate Bill \(SB\) 2322](#) and [2013 ND SB 2323](#) for details.

- Qualified individual (*means any agent, investment adviser representative, or person who serves in a supervisory, compliance or legal capacity for a broker-dealer or investment advisor*)
- Clergy (*NOTE: not required if knowledge is gained as a spiritual advisor*)
- Addiction counselor
- Caregiver
- Chiropractor
- Congregate care personnel
- Coroner
- Counselor
- Dental hygienist
- Dentist
- Emergency medical personnel
- Family therapist
- Firefighter
- Hospital personnel
- Law enforcement officer
- Marriage therapist
- Medical examiner
- Mental health professional
- Nurse
- Nursing home personnel
- Occupational therapist
- Optometrist
- Other professional
- Pharmacist
- Physical therapist
- Physician
- Podiatrist
- Social worker

Others Who May Report

- Any other person may voluntarily report to the North Dakota Department of Human Services or to law enforcement.

When to Report

- A mandated reporter **must report** if in an official or professional capacity, he or she:
 - has knowledge that a vulnerable adult has been subjected to abuse or neglect, or
 - observes a vulnerable adult being subjected to conditions or circumstances that reasonably would result in abuse or neglect.
- **IMPORTANT: A mandated reporter is required to report as soon as possible.**

What to Include in the Report (to the extent reasonably possible)

- Name, age, and address of the alleged vulnerable adult.
- Name and address of the caregiver (if any).
- Nature and extent of the alleged abuse or neglect or the conditions and circumstances that would reasonably be expected to result in abuse or neglect.

- Any evidence of previous abuse or neglect.
- Any other information that, in the reporter's opinion, may be helpful in establishing the cause of the alleged abuse or neglect and the identity of the person responsible for the alleged abuse or neglect.

FAILURE TO REPORT: *Any person required to report who willfully fails to do so may be guilty of an infraction and subject to a fine up to \$1,000.*

How to Report Suspected Abuse, Neglect, or Financial Exploitation:

- **URGENT:** If a vulnerable adult is in **immediate danger**, call law enforcement **NOW** and afterwards report concerns to Vulnerable Adult Protective Services by:
 - Filing a report **online** at: <https://bit.ly/3vbYbEj>, or
 - Completing and submitting the reporting form www.nd.gov/eforms/doc/sfn01607.pdf
 - Via email to dhsvaps@nd.gov or fax to 701.328.8744
 - Contacting the Vulnerable Adult Protective Services Central **Intake Line** toll-free at **1.855.462.5465, Option 2**. Messages can be left after hours.

Online Training for Mandatory Reporters

- Mandatory reporters may receive one Continuing Education Unit (CEU) for completion of the online training found here: www.cnd.nd.gov/STLPCatalog/325/PUBLICCOURSESPOSTEDONWEBSITES/MandatedRepVAPSI/story.html

Additional Resources: For more information, please visit www.nd.gov/dhs/services/adultsaging

State of Minnesota

Vulnerable adult protection and elder abuse - Report suspected vulnerable adult abuse, neglect or financial exploitation

MAARC – Adult Abuse Reporting 1-844-880-1574

Everyone needs help sometimes. The Minnesota Department of Human Services and other state agencies, along with counties and communities across the state, work to promote safety and well-being for all.

If you suspect something is wrong, speak up. One conversation could change someone's life.

The [Minnesota Adult Abuse Reporting Center \(MAARC\)](#) provides a toll-free number, **1-844- 880-1574**, for the general public to report suspected maltreatment of vulnerable adults.

[Mandated reporters](#) – including law enforcement, educators, doctors, nurses, social workers and other licensed professionals – can use a web-based reporting

system. Call 911 first if you are reporting an emergency that requires immediate assistance from law enforcement, fire department or an ambulance.

- [Definitions of vulnerable adult and maltreatment](#)
- [Reporting suspected maltreatment](#)
- [Mandated reporters](#)