

October 13, 2005

From: Task Force for the Protection of Children and Youth

Re: New Policy for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse

We are pleased to present you with the attached, recently adopted Diocesan Policy for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse. Diocesan churches and ministries are required to comply with this policy. We ask you to read this policy carefully before diocesan convention. We will have some time at convention for an overview, questions and answers.

Each church and diocesan ministry is required to adopt a Policy for the Protection of Children and Youth from Sexual Abuse. Your church may choose simply to adopt this diocesan policy as it is written. Or you may choose to adapt this policy to meet your specific needs. If you make changes to this policy, the changes must clarify and strengthen this existing document. In other words, churches and other diocesan ministries may not weaken this policy and its requirements.

The Task Force's work continues as we seek to assist our churches and ministries in implementing this policy. By year's end we plan to make recommendations which include:

- Conducting Affordable Background Checks
- Guidelines for Confidential Record-Keeping
- Standard Application Form which includes an authorization for release of information and an acknowledgement of receipt of this policy

You will notice that *Safeguarding God's Children* is the required training program for abuse prevention. This new program of the Episcopal Church is an excellent resource. Please contact your deanery's *Safeguarding God's Children* coordinator to schedule a training:

*Eagle Cove*: the Rev. Keith Adams, Good Shepherd, San Angelo, ph. 325-949-6260

*Llano Estacado*: Canon Claire Cowden, Hulsey Center, Lubbock, ph. 806-763-1370

*Panhandle*: the Rev. Dru Ferguson, St. Andrew's, Amarillo, ph. 806-376-6316

*Permian Basin*: Deacon Judy Cobb, St. Barnabas', Odessa, ph. 432-362-3881.

Please direct questions, comments and concerns to Ms. Anna Marie Wanasek, Task Force Chair, ph. 806-762-2893 or Canon Claire Cowden, Task Force member, 806-763-1370.

We thank you for your commitment to provide safe places and ministries for the children God places in our care.