

REGISTERED SEX OFFENDER AGREEMENT

This document is an example of “A Parish Integration Agreement” between a parish and a known sex offender who wishes to join the parish. This sample plan does not cover every possible contingency. A parish may have special concerns and may wish to include special provisions in an agreement with a known sexual offender. Parishes are encouraged to think carefully about the terms of any such agreement. In all cases, parishes must confer with the coordinator for the Office of Review of Sexual Misconduct Allegations (ORSMA), who may work with the legal counsel of the Orthodox Church in America regarding the agreement they wish to adopt. The individualized plan/ agreement must be in accordance with the policy on sex offenders (*Policies, Standards, and Procedures Section 15*).

Additionally, each parish rector must communicate with ORSMA in the event a sex offender expresses the desire to join part of the parish, as ORSMA must have copies of the paperwork, and will be able to provide specific guidance regarding nuanced concerns.

Adherence to this document not only protects the sex offender but, more importantly, protects the Orthodox Church in America and our parishes from potential harm and abuse, as well as liability. Although this document is not legally binding, violation of the agreement by the sex offender may include legal ramifications, based on necessary reporting.

SAMPLE PARISH INTEGRATION AGREEMENT

This agreement is between (parish name), (city), (state), and (sex offender's name), who wishes to attend any service or Church activity of (parish name). This agreement is intended to protect (sex offender's name) and ensure that his/her integration into our parish is possible. This agreement provides for accountability and protects against the re-committing of any sex offense, especially against a minor, vulnerable adult, or previous victim. This agreement is also a vehicle to assist the parish of (parish name) Orthodox Church to grow spiritually as a healing community that is committed to helping broken people being part of the Church. (sex offender's name) and (parish name) agree and understand that this agreement is not intended to be a legally enforceable contract, but instead is intended to document a moral understanding between (sex offender's name) and (parish name).

Relevant terminology:

Minor: any person under the age of consent as defined by relevant statute of the political jurisdiction where the parish is located.

Vulnerable adult: Any adult with physical, emotional, or cognitive impairments, or those who are in need of assistance with activities of daily living, as well as adults who are under emotional duress, as determined by the parish rector and/or personnel of the Orthodox Church in America.

Sex offender: Anyone with a conviction for child or adult sexual assault, molestation, or child pornography, or who has incurred civil penalties related to alleged sexual misconduct. This category also includes those against whom a complaint has been filed with ORSMA and in whose case ORSMA has determined that a preponderance of evidence has proven that misconduct is "more likely than not" to have occurred. Note, this definition of "sex offender" is not intended to be exhaustive and can be expanded as needed at the direction of ORSMA.

Guardians: Two adults within good standing in the parish. They should be of the same gender as the offender. Their roles with respect to oversight of the offender will have been explained in depth. Those chosen to serve as guardians must be comfortable supervising the offender while he/she is on parish grounds or present at parish events.

EXPECTATIONS OF (PARISH NAME):

(1) (parish name) will do its best to provide a loving, forgiving, non-judgmental, and yet accountable, environment, by allowing and encouraging (sex offender's name) to regularly attend Divine Services, so long as he/she is meeting the expectations of him/her as outlined below.

(2) At the discretion of the parish rector and diocesan bishop, and in accordance with the Holy Canons of the Orthodox Church, (sex offender's name) will be given the opportunity to attend/participate and have eventually the possibility to become a full member of (parish name). Being a full member of the

parish does not mean that the offender will be able to hold any positions of influence or leadership in the parish.

(3) The parish rector will generally be available during regular office hours, and by appointment, to help counsel (sex offender's name).

(4) If the sex offender is an Orthodox Christian, the parish rector and (sex offender's name) will work out a regular schedule for (sex offender's name) to make his/her sacramental confession, once the diocesan bishop has given approval for (sex offender's name) to attend (parish name). If the sex offender is not yet an Orthodox Christian, then the parish rector and (sex offender's name) will work out a regular schedule for (sex offender's name) to make the "non-sacramental equivalent" of a confession. This latter act is not bound by the seal of confession, but by the most exacting standards of pastoral privacy and discretion. Its setting should be non-sacramental, but it should otherwise resemble the confession in terms of content confessed and guidance offered.

(5) The parish rector will appoint two guardians who will do their best to ensure that (sex offender's name) avoids or is quickly removed from situations on church property that could result in accusations of sexual misconduct being made against him/her by children or vulnerable adults. The primary duties and responsibilities of the guardians are outlined in greater detail below.

(6) The parish will ensure that the (sex offender) is supervised and accompanied by at least one guardian at all times he/she is on the church property, including restrooms and parking lots. The guardians will agree to these guidelines and show their approval by signing this agreement.

(7) The parish rector will provide (sex offender's name) with his cell phone number so that he/she can contact them in cases of emergency if he/she is having severe temptations to commit a sexual offense and/or needs help removing himself/herself from a situation. While the parish rector should make himself available for emergency spiritual support, it is understood that all responsibility for decision-making lies with the sex offender. The guardians may also make themselves available to support the sex offender in this capacity, if they so agree.

(8) This agreement is subject to changes and revisions. (sex offender's name) agrees to abide by any additions, amendments, or changes that the parish rector may deem necessary for the welfare of (sex offender's name) and his/her family, the parish of (parish name), and the community at large.

(9) Any violation of this agreement will result in (sex offender's name) expulsion from (parish name), as well as any mandated notification of the offender's therapist, parole/probation officer, or law enforcement.

(10) The parish will ensure that the sex offender is not put into a position of influence or leadership within the church.

(11) Parish staff, the parish council, parish childcare providers/teachers, and anyone else the parish rector deems necessary will be made aware of this agreement so they can help provide accountability and oversight for the protection of both (sex offender's name) and children or vulnerable adults. They will also be informed of (sex offender's name) expressed desire for reformation and the actions in which he/she has engaged with this goal of reformation in mind.

EXPECTATIONS:

(1) (sex offender's name) will fully disclose the exact nature of his/her past offense(s) to the current parish rector and any future parish rector(s). This information will be held as confidential and shared on a "need to know" basis, as determined solely by the parish rector, in consultation with his diocesan bishop and ORSMA.

(2) (sex offender's name) will ensure that he/she is supervised and accompanied by at least one guardian at all times he/she is on the church property, including restrooms and parking lots. The guardians will agree to these guidelines and show their approval by signing this agreement.

(3) (sex offender's name) shall avoid all contact with minors under the age of consent in the relevant jurisdiction, vulnerable adults, or any other individual relevant to of his/her past offense(s) or crime(s), and he/she shall never be alone with any of them.

(4) If asked to supervise or watch a child or vulnerable adult for any reason, (sex offender's name) will decline.

(5) (sex offender's name) will not sit or stand next to a child or vulnerable adult at any time he/she is on church property. Whenever possible, in any given area of the church property, (sex offender's name) will attempt to stand or sit with one of his/her guardians immediately beside him/her.

(6) (sex offender's name) will not be in areas of the church where children or vulnerable adults are playing, congregating, or being taught. The sole exception to this rule is in the church temple or chapel during Divine Services. Even during these times, (sex offender's name) will not stand in the hallways unless several other adults are also congregating there at the same time (e.g., immediately after services), as children frequently congregate in those areas.

(7) (sex offender's name) will not take a child or vulnerable adult from the church or met/acquainted with at the church with him/her, provide transportation for such a person, or attempt to see such a person outside of Divine Services and church functions.

(8) (sex offender's name) will not place himself/herself in any position of authority in the parish.

(9) (sex offender's name) will not engage in any comments or activity that could reasonably be

construed as sexual misconduct, including making sexual remarks or sexual gestures, or engaging in any sexual humor.

(10) Parish staff, the parish council, parish childcare providers/teachers, and anyone else the parish rector deems necessary will be made aware of this agreement so they can help provide accountability and oversight for the protection of both (sex offender's name) and children or vulnerable adults.

(11) If the parish rector asks (sex offender's name) to meet with him/her for any reason, (sex offender's name) will comply as soon as possible.

(12) If (sex offender's name) has sexual thoughts or fantasies regarding a minor or vulnerable adult, he/she will notify the parish rector and a treatment provider/therapist immediately. He/she will be assured of assistance without fear of punishment, as long as he/she has not acted on the thoughts.

(13) (sex offender's name) will sign a release of information for the parish rector to permit communication with any and all of his/her treatment providers/therapists.

(14) Should (sex offender's name) lapse and commit a sexual offense, he/she will immediately notify law enforcement, or if he/she desires, he/she will immediately notify the parish rector outside of sacramental confession, who will assist him/her in notifying law enforcement.

(15) (sex offender's name) will also agree to attend, on a weekly basis, a 12-step or similar program for people with sexual addictions, approved by the parish rector in consultation with ORSMA. He/she will work on the program and find a sponsor as an extra member of this healing team. He/she will attend these meetings indefinitely, missing only with permission from the parish rector, the relevant clinical therapist, or the parole/ probation officer.

(16) (sex offender's name) agrees to abide by any additions, amendments, or changes that the parish rector, in consultation with ORSMA, may deem necessary for the welfare of (sex offender's name), and his/her family, the parish of (parish name), and the community at large.

(17) Any violation of this agreement will result in (sex offender's name) expulsion from (parish name), as well as any mandated notification of the offender's therapist, parole/probation officer, or law enforcement.

With our signatures, we agree to the terms and conditions set forth in this document.

Parish rector's name & signature

Date

Sex offender's name & signature

Date

Guardian 1's name & signature

Date

Guardian 2's name & signature

Date