

Safe Environment Program Framework for Youth Protection



THE VISION

Youth are recognized and valued as gifts from God

THE PLAN

- Education is provided to protect children
- All staff members and volunteers participate in training
- Best practices commitment to be signed
- Resources are provided
- Hiring practices include background checks

FRAMEWORK COMPONENTS

- Documents and Policies
- Best Practices
- Curriculum and Resources
- Hiring Practices
- Definitions
- Forms

DIOCESAN POLICY

- Report to the Authorities
- Inform the Victim Assistance Coordinator

YOUTH PROTECTION COORDINATORS

- Appointed for every parish/high school
- Implement program at local level
- Report annually to Diocesan office

BEST PRACTICES FOR ADULTS WHO WORK WITH YOUTH

- Two-deep leadership
- No one-on-one contact
- Respect of privacy
- Proper preparations
- Separate accommodations
- No secret organizations

WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

- The physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, exploitation, negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child under the age of 18 (except in the case of sexual abuse, where age is specified by the child protection law of the State) by a person who is responsible for the child's welfare

4 TYPES OF CHILD ABUSE

- Physical
- Sexual
- Neglect
- Emotional

PHYSICAL ABUSE

- Striking with a hand, fist or instrument
- Throwing
- Shaking
- Burning
- Suffocating
- Drowning

RECOGNIZING PHYSICAL ABUSE

- Physical Indicators*
- Bruises and/or abrasions in suspicious areas
 - Burns

WHAT IS NEGLECT

- Chronic failure to meet basic needs
 - Food, clothing, shelter
 - Medical care
 - Education
 - Supervision

RECOGNIZING NEGLECT

- Physical Indicators*
- Fatigue
 - Hunger
 - Poor school attendance
 - Lack of adequate grooming and/or clothing
 - Unattended health needs

Behavioral Indicators

- Habit disorders
- Poor relationships
- Behavioral extremes
- Sleep problems
- Withdrawal
- Anxiety

CHILD ABUSE REPORTING LAWS

- Any person who "has reason to believe" must report.
- Failure to report may be a Class B misdemeanor, as well as moral and/or civil liability.
- Names of reporters are confidential.
- Immunity for reporters from civil or criminal liability when reporting in good faith.

SEXUAL ABUSE

- Utilization of a child for sexual gratification by an adult or older child in which the child is being used for the sexual stimulation of the adult.

RECOGNIZING SEXUAL ABUSE

- Physical Indicators*
- Sexually transmitted disease
 - Recurrent urinary tract infections
 - Difficulty walking and sitting

Behavioral Indicators

- Premature knowledge of explicit sex acts
- Aggressive, overt sexual behavior
- Sleep disorders
- Self-destructive behaviors
- Behavioral extremes

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

- Mental/Emotional harm inflicted by a constant pattern of verbal harassment, threats, and systematic destruction of a child's self-esteem

RECOGNIZING MENTAL/EMOTIONAL ABUSE

- Physical Indicators*
- Eating disorders
 - Elimination problems
 - Speech disorders

Behavioral Indicators

- Habit disorders
- Poor relationships
- Behavioral extremes
- Sleep problems
- Withdrawal
- Anxiety

CHARACTERISTICS OF EMOTIONALLY ABUSIVE PARENTS

- Belittling/criticizing
- Little or no interest in child
- Threatening child or child's possessions
- Cutting child off from normal social expression
- Teaching deviant patterns of behavior

COMPLYING WITH DIOCESAN POLICY

Please read this brochure carefully.

If you have reason to believe child abuse may have taken place, **YOU MUST REPORT IT.**

Familiarize yourself with the definitions of abuse and the indicators of abuse.

Read carefully the "Best Practices for Adults Who Work With Youth." The practice of "two-deep leadership" — along with the other practices described — are designed to protect children and young adults as well as those who minister to them.

A copy of diocesan policy, "Report and Inform," is provided in English and Spanish. This policy, along with the telephone number of the Victim Assistance Coordinator, may be easily photocopied and displayed throughout the area of your ministry or service.

Please note that one panel of this brochure, entitled "Catholic Diocese of Evansville: Best Practices for Pastoral Conduct," is designed to be removed from this brochure, signed and submitted to your parish Youth Protection Coordinator.

The panel to be removed is on the reverse side of these directions. Please provide the requested information, including your printed name, your signature, the date of your signature, and the parish or agency you serve.

A copy of the "Best Practices for Pastoral Conduct" is provided for you as a reminder of your commitment. It may be dated for your own records.

Catholic Diocese of Evansville
BEST PRACTICES FOR PASTORAL CONDUCT
(For Priests, Deacons, Pastoral Ministers,
Administrators, Staff, and Volunteers)

Our children are the most important gifts God has entrusted to us. As one who works with children in any capacity, I promise to follow these best practices as a condition of my providing services to the children and youth of our diocese.

I will:

- treat everyone with respect, loyalty, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity, and consideration.
- report any suspected abuse and neglect to the local Child Protective Services agency or civil authorities; then inform the appropriate supervisor.
- report suspected sexual abuse to the local Child Protective Services agency or civil authorities; then inform the Victim Assistance Coordinator.
- cooperate fully in any investigation of abuse of children and/or youth.
- participate fully in the required training sessions for adults working with children/youth.
- refrain from smoking or using tobacco products at any time while serving children and/or youth in parish or diocesan sponsored functions.
- refrain from using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs at any time while serving children and/or youth in parish or diocesan functions.

I understand that sexual abuse of a person who habitually has only the imperfect use of reason is to be considered equivalent to a minor. Sexual abuse includes the acquisition, possession, or distribution of pornographic images of minors under the age of eighteen, for purposes of sexual gratification, by whatever means or using whatever technology.

I understand that failure to report suspected abuse to civil authorities is, according to the law, a Class B misdemeanor. The only exceptions to this requirement involve information learned within the Sacrament of Reconciliation or within an attorney-client relationship.

I understand that as one who works with children and/or youth in any capacity, I am subject to a thorough criminal history background check.

I understand that any action inconsistent with these best practices may result in termination of my giving services to children and/or youth.

Complete form and forward to Youth Protection Coordinator.

Adult's Printed First, Middle and Last Name

Adult's Signature

Today's Date

Parish/Agency

E-mail Address

BEST PRACTICES FOR ADULTS WHO WORK WITH YOUTH

Two-deep Leadership

Two approved ("approved" means that the Pastor knows the person and approves him or her AND the person has submitted to a criminal history background check) adult leaders or one approved leader and a parent of a participant, both of whom must be 21 years of age or older, are required for all parish sponsored youth activities. The parish is responsible for ensuring that sufficient leadership is provided for all activities.

No one-on-one contact

One-on-one contact between adults and youth is not permitted. In the rare situations that require personal conferences, the meeting is to be conducted in view of other adults and youths.

Note: Professional Mental Health Counselors, who are required to follow the Ethical Code of their professional discipline, State licensing requirements, and State legislation regulating professional conduct, may conduct one-on-one private counseling sessions.

The term Professional Mental Health Counselor, as used herein, means a person with a master's degree in a recognized mental health discipline, who is licensed, or supervised by a licensed professional, and is employed by Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Evansville or is officially approved by the Catholic Education Office to provide services on school premises.

Respect of privacy

Adult leaders must respect the privacy of youth and intrude only to the extent that health and safety require. Adults must protect their own privacy in similar situations.

Separate accommodations

When staying overnight, no youth is permitted to sleep in the room of an adult other than his or her own parent or guardian.

Proper preparation . . .

. . . for high adventure activities. Activities with elements of risk should never be undertaken without proper preparation, equipment, clothing, competent supervision, and safety measures.

No secret organizations

The Diocese of Evansville does not recognize any secret organizations as part of its program. All aspects of the youth program are open to observation by pastors, parents, and leaders. Even in cases of closed membership (i.e. TEC, Knights of Columbus Squire Circles, etc.) parents and pastors MUST be admitted at any time to observe the program.

Appropriate attire

Proper clothing for activities is required. Modest dress is always required. Guidelines for appropriate attire for a given activity should be written and stated before all youth functions.

Constructive discipline

Discipline used in youth ministry, educational, and catechetical ministry should be constructive and reflect the Church's values. Corporal punishment is never permitted.

Hazing is prohibited

Physical hazing and initiations are prohibited and may not be included as part of any activity. Adult leaders must monitor and guide the leadership techniques used by youth leaders and ensure that diocesan policies are followed.

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- report suspected sexual abuse to the local Child Protective Services agency or civil authorities; then inform the bishop's office.
- cooperate fully in any investigation of abuse of children and/or youth.
- participate fully in the required training sessions for adults working with children/youth.
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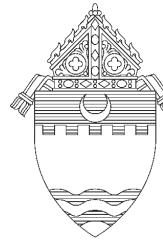
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For my own records:

I signed and returned this form to the Youth Protection Coordinator in my parish/agency of the Diocese of Evansville on

Date



DIOCESAN POLICY: REPORT AND INFORM

Report child abuse

Every allegation of child abuse must be reported to Child Protective Services, an agency of Indiana state government.

Toll-free: 800-800-5556

Report and inform

In the event of an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor (a person under 18) by diocesan personnel, report the allegation to authorities, and inform the Victim Assistance Coordinator for the diocese.

Toll-free: 866-200-3004

Local: 812-490-9565

Denuncie

Toda acusación de abuso de un niño debe ser reportado a los Servicios de Protección del Niño (Child Protection Service, CPS), una agencia del gobierno del estado de Indiana.

Gratis: 800-800-5556

Denuncie e informe

En caso de una acusación del abuso sexual de un menor de edad (persona menor de 18 años) por personal diocesano, es la política de la diócesis de Evansville reportar la acusación a las autoridades públicas e informar al Coordinador Diocesano de Asistencia para las Víctimas.

Gratis: 866-200-3004

Local: 812-490-9565

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The full text of diocesan policies and procedures is available at parishes and YPC offices, at the Catholic Center, and on the diocesan website,

www.evdi.org

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