



Honor Thy Children

Archdiocese of Louisville continuing education for the awareness and prevention of child abuse

UNDERSTANDING WHEN A CHILD DISCLOSES ABUSE

Archdiocese of Louisville

April 2023

As we close out Child Abuse Prevention Month, now is an important time to ask what would you do if a child disclosed abuse? Most importantly you must report it as Kentucky is a mandatory reporting state. This can be done by calling 1-877-KYSAFE1.

It also helps to understand disclosure. The barriers to disclosure involve not only the power that abusers have over children, but also the reality that sex and sexuality are difficult topics for children to discuss with adults. Messages that children receive about sex and sexuality often create an atmosphere in which talking about sexual abuse is embarrassing or worse, forbidden. Furthermore, sexual abuse is humiliating and causes shame for children, which inhibits their disclosure. Children tend to disclose either purposefully by deliberately telling someone or accidentally by giving out clues or

signs. More often, children disclose accidentally by attempting to signal adult caregivers that they are in pain. Be aware that children are attempting to "tell" through subtle behaviors. Hence, an attentive adult who



notices and attends to these subtle signs is necessary for the disclosure to occur. There are immediate and long-term disclosures. Immediate disclosure refers to a telling that occurs while the abuse is occurring. Know that there are times when abusers will stop offending a particular child because of the anticipated consequence to the abuser. Faced with being accused or "found out," abusers may change their behavior to protect themselves. Long-term

disclosure refers to a telling that happens once the abusive interaction has ended. This includes situations in which an older adolescent or adult discloses that he or she was abused as a child. Although the individual may be out of harm's way, he or she will likely feel some emotional vulnerability that needs attention. Working to create an age-appropriate safety plan to deal with flashbacks, feelings of suicide, and self-imposed guilt/shame is critical with this disclosure. Whichever way children or adults disclose, it is important to acknowledge the courage that it took for them to disclose and attend to their safety. In many cases when a long-term disclosure has been made, the individual continues to experience the fear imposed by the threats they experienced as children.

If you need support or someone to talk to:

- ☺ Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky or Indiana: 800.CHILDREN/800.422.4453 www.pcaky.org www.pcaain.org
- ☺ Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline 800.4.A.CHILD 800.422.4453 www.childhelp.org



Martine Siegel, Archdiocese of Louisville, Victim Assistance Coordinator is available anytime to answer any questions about disclosure 502.636.1044 or via email msiegel@archlou.org

Safe Caregivers & Safe Situations

Most victims of sexual abuse were abused by someone they knew or in a place they were familiar with. You can take steps to surround children with safe caregivers in safe environments.

- Abusers often become friendly with potential victims and their families, earning trust and gaining time alone with children. Observe your child with others, and listen to your gut. If you feel uncomfortable with the way an adult is interacting with your child, step in.
- Ask your babysitter for background checks, including criminal and child abuse/neglect checks.
- Check that all of your child's programs require background checks, personal interviews, and professional recommendations for all adults—including volunteers—who work with children.
- Monitor children's Internet and smartphone use. Offenders have been known to use the Internet to lure children into physical contact.

Educate & Empower Your Child

Talking to your child about their bodies, body safety, and personal boundaries is key in keeping them safe. Child safety is an adult responsibility.

- Use the correct names for body parts, including their genitals, as they are learning to identify them (starting as early as possible).
- Make sure your child knows the difference between "okay" and "not okay" touches. No one should ask to see or touch the private parts of their body, except a medical provider or a caregiver who is helping them clean or use the restroom. No one should show them pictures of private parts. Teach them if those things occur, tell a trusted adult. Teach children that once they can bathe and use the restroom on their own, they should not accept such help from adults and older children.
- Teach children that it's okay for them to say "no" if they don't want to hug or kiss someone, including family, and always respect their decision.
- Educate children about the difference between good secrets and bad secrets. A surprise party is a good secret because it isn't kept for long. A secret that they are told to keep forever is not okay.

From our partners with the "Face It" movement



The Face It Movement launched in 2013 as an initiative led by Kosair Charities in response to the number of child abuse deaths in the Commonwealth. Face It focuses on a three-pronged approach to addressing child abuse and neglect: promote best practices in child abuse prevention and intervention, advocate for effective policies to improve the child welfare system, and build awareness and engage the community.



UPCOMING TRAININGS
All trainings start at 630p unless otherwise indicated.

No one under 16 will be admitted to the training. This includes infants.

If you think you will be working with children please make plans to attend a training at your earliest opportunity.

5.15.23
St. Joseph (E-Town)

5.16.23
Holy Spirit (Louisville)

6.13.23
St. Andrew Academy

NOTE: There will be no trainings in July for the summer break

An updated list can always found at

www.archlou.org/safe

Be sure to bookmark this site for updates and/or cancellations as we enter inclement weather season and the website is the primary avenue for communicating changes to the training schedule.

Do not delay attendance (even if you're unsure when you'll need the training) as we enter inclement weather season, trainings could be postponed or cancelled due to bad weather.

IMPORTANT

Think you're compliant but aren't sure? You can always check in with your school/parish safe environment coordinator to see if your dates are current.

Keeping our kids safe & happy is a priority



Due to the mature subject matter discussed at safe environment trainings no one under the age of 16 will be admitted into a training

Children will not be allowed to "sit outside" a training unsupervised while a parent or caregiver attends a session.

FRIENDLY REMINDER

There will be NO trainings in the month of July due to summer break

If you think you will need to be Safe Environment compliant in July please make plans to attend any of the May or June trainings.

Fall trainings (to include multiple August trainings) are being coordinated and will be posted at www.archlou.org/safe once finalized.



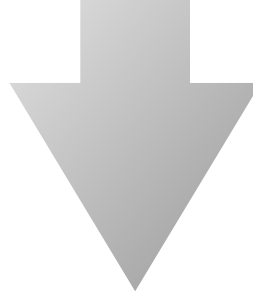
CODE OF CONDUCT: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Because of the many programs and services parishes, schools and other Church organizations sponsor, the Catholic Church is a major youth-serving organization in our community. As such, we must model effective safeguards and proactive initiatives in our safe environment programming. By completing the Archdiocese of Louisville's required in person Safe Environment Training, the member agrees to abide by

the "Code of Conduct". It is meant to assist employees and volunteers who work with young people to employ good sense and best practices in their ministries.

These policies relate to ministry or employment related circumstances and should be understood in that context. Obvious exceptions exist for employees and volunteers with families. Below are some examples...

Some examples of, but not limited to best practices



- Maintain a professional role and be aware of the trust and power you possess as a minister to young people.
- Avoid physical contact when alone with a minor. Physical contact with young people can be misconstrued, especially in private settings.
- Never view, possess, or distribute child pornography.
- Avoid being alone with a minor in a residence, rectory, sleeping facility, locker room, rest room, dressing facility, or other closed rooms.
- Never take an overnight trip alone with a minor.
- Avoid driving alone in a vehicle with a young person.
- Avoid providing overnight accommodations for minors in rectories or private homes.
- Avoid meeting privately with minors in areas where there is no window or where the door cannot remain open. If one-on-one pastoral care of a minor is necessary (e.g. Sacrament of Reconciliation), avoid meeting in isolated environments.
- Never use alcohol when engaged in ministering to minor.
- Refrain from giving inappropriate or expensive gifts to young people.
- Ensure that all activities (extracurricular, catechetical, youth ministry, scouting, athletics, etc.) for which you are responsible have been approved in advance by the appropriate administrator.
- Have an adequate number of adults present at events. A minimum of two adults must always be present during activities for minors.
- Release young people only to parents or guardians, unless the parent or guardian has provided permission allowing release to another adult.
- Obtain written parental permission, including a signed medical release form, before taking minors away from the parish, school, or agency for events, field trips, etc. Permission slips should include the type, location, dates, and times of the activity and emergency contact numbers.
- Ensure that all social media utilized in ministry with minors be approved and monitored by the appropriate administrator (pastor, principal, director). Ensure that parents are informed about all social media communication utilized by the group/ ministry in question.
- Never engage in the physical discipline of minors or in discipline that frightens or degrades them. Discipline should be handled in coordination with a supervisor and parents.

MONTHLY SAFE ENVIRONMENT TIP

Summer is nearing and as previously mentioned there will be no trainings in July, so if you think you will need a training be sure to attend one of the scheduled trainings.

There will be plenty of trainings scheduled in August, but now is a good time to attend even if you think you may not need it. There's no sense in being rushed to complete the training and risk not having one available during that time.

Also, no one under 16 will be admitted to the training due to the material discussed. From time to time parents will show up with children and want to leave them sitting outside unattended. This isn't an option. Please arrange for child care prior to attending a training.

Again, as a reminder, if you are working with children you **MUST** have completed and **IN PERSON** Safe Environment Training and have an Archdiocese of Louisville issued background check not older than five years.

A five year Safe Environment refresher can be satisfied online or by attending another in person session.

If you prefer the online option please see your parish/school Safe Environment Coordinator for more information.

If you don't know who that is contact Scott Fitzgerald, Coordinator of Safe Environment Services sfitzgerald@archlou.org or 502.471.2132

**Archdiocese of Louisville
Office of Safe Environment**

Martine Bacci Siegel, MSN, RN, CNS
Maloney Center
1200 South Shelby Street
Louisville, KY 40220

Phone: 502.636.1044
Fax: 502.634.3381
E-mail: msiegel@archlou.org

No child or adult should ever experience abuse by anyone, especially a church minister. We all have the right to be treated with dignity and to expect our church to reflect the goodness of God in all of its dealings.

We hope that this information is helpful to all in our communities who are working to prevent and respond to childhood sexual abuse. Please let us know if you need further assistance or information by calling or emailing our victim assistance coordinator, Ms. Martine Siegel, at 502/636-1044; victimassistance@archlou.org

We must heed God's call to care for the most vulnerable among us and to continue our efforts toward wholeness and health in dealing with sexual abuse.

PREVENTING ABUSE: WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

Listen to and honor children by giving them a voice. Teach them personal boundaries and respect for their bodies. Discuss with children what is appropriate and inappropriate touch. Explain to them that other people do not have the right to touch them in ways that make them uncomfortable. Help younger children identify "private parts," "bathing suit zones" with appropriate terminology for all parts of their body. Communicate to children that there is nothing wrong with understanding their bodies and talking about their bodies. All bodies are beautiful, sacred, and holy. Adults often give mixed messages to children about their rights to have a say in who touches them and how they are touched. It is not uncommon, for example, for adults to pressure children into

kissing or hugging aunts or uncles whom they may be hesitant to approach. Give children the right to decide who touches them,



including family members. As an adult, listen to and trust your own intuition and instincts. If you sense something is not right or seems odd, it may well be. Do not leave children in the care of someone you do not have a good feeling about. Become a "Tell-able" Adult. Create an environment of

responsiveness and comfort so that children feel free to disclose. Create an environment that makes it clearly

known that children will be listened to and believed. As youth workers (counselors, teachers, principals, catechists, priests, youth ministers, coaches), communicate the idea that children will

be heard. Display posters, books, and pamphlets that indicate a level of sensitivity to child abuse. Intentionally raise the issues of "uncomfortable and confusing touches" with children. Invite them to tell you anything that may bother or troubling them. Most of all, be in tune with children that are in your care.