



Honor Thy Children

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

AM I DOING THE RIGHT THING?

A big reason for the in-person training (aside from understanding child sexual abuse) is to review the policies and procedures of Safe Environment and what is allowed and what isn't.

Below are a list of sample scenarios, take a look and see how you would respond. You can find the answers on page four of this newsletter.

SCENARIO #1

As the 8th grade youth group advisor, you think it would be easier to communicate with the other members via DM's on x.com (formerly twitter) and DM on Instagram. Are you Safe Environment compliant?

SCENARIO #2

You were gifted extra tickets to the big game from a parish member and you want to take your team. You emailed the parents with the itinerary and received permission from all to take them. Are you Safe Environment compliant?

SCENARIO #3

Parent A shows up to pick up her child following a service project. She said parent B had to work late and asked if she would give her son a ride home. You know them both well, do you release child B to parent A?



SCENARIO #4

Connor is a talented 8th grade basketball player that is moving on to high school basketball, after helping your 1st graders to a championship season. You want to thank him, but purchasing an expensive pair of new basketball shoes for next season. Are you Safe Environment compliant?

SCENARIO #5

It's the last night of the youth conference and the chaperones decide to treat the group to dinner while at the same time treating themselves to the highly recommended local wine. Are you Safe Environment Compliant?

Archdiocese of Louisville

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If you need support or someone to talk to:

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

Are You Safe Environment Compliant?

Are you working regularly with children?
If so you must have attended an Archdiocese of Louisville Safe Environment Training.

Has it been 5 years since your initial in person training? You must complete your 5 year refresher training

You must also have a satisfactory background check not older than 5 years.

See your Safe Environment Coordinator today to verify your compliance!

HOW CHILDREN ARE EFFECTED BY SEXUAL ABUSE

Children are individuals, and each is affected differently by abuse. Several people could have the trauma of sexual abuse occur in their lives, but each individual will respond and react in varying ways according to his or her personality, family of origin, support systems, gender, age at the time of the abuse, and many other variables too numerous to list. Other factors that impact the magnitude of the damage include duration of abuse, level of intrusiveness/violation of the abuse, type, and



severity of threats used to maintain secrecy, relationship to the abuser, the number of perpetrators, and age at the time of disclosure as well as reactions to

disclosure. It is never appropriate to try to predict how a child may be affected by sexual abuse. What someone may deem "mild" sexual abuse may traumatize a child for the rest of his or her life. Another child who suffered from what others may describe as "severe" abuse, may, with proper care, heal and live a healthy and productive life. The effects of abuse are unpredictable, and all individuals need support and compassion as they find their unique paths to healing.

Safe Environment Coordinator

Each parish/school is required to have a Safe Environment Coordinator that maintains a local database of who is Safe Environment compliant.

If you think you will be serving in a capacity that requires your compliance please see them as soon as possible to verify your status.

If you need to attend the initial In-person session, a best practice is to not wait, even if you're unsure of your need. Trainings are subject to postponement due to inclement weather, etc. and you don't want to be left out of an opportunity to serve due to non-compliance.

Additionally if you're a parent whose child participates in activities that require adults to be Safe Environment compliant, feel free to reach out to the coordinator to ensure they've taken the necessary steps to gain compliance.

If you're not sure who your coordinator is, contact Scott Fitzgerald (sfitzgerald@archlo.org) and he will let you know.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT TRAINING

Nearly 300 people attended a recent in-person Safe Environment training at St. Athanasius



Anyone working with minors *MUST* have the following:

- Attend an Archdiocese of Louisville initial in-person training
- A refresher training (either on-line or in person) every 5 years
- A current Archdiocese of Louisville issued background check not older than five years.

WHAT IS CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE?

Child abuse is widespread. It cuts across all cultures, religions, and socioeconomic groups. It is estimated that approximately one in four girls and one in six boys are sexually abused by the time they are 18 years of age. Many people are well into adulthood before something triggers in them a need to reveal childhood sexual abuse.

Because childhood sexual abuse is traumatic, many will suppress these memories out of pain and survival, only to recall later what actually happened. This is a common scenario in post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD).



Many, out of shame, will unfortunately never report the abuse. It is estimated that only 10% of victims report their abuse, which is a fraction

of the sexual abuse that actually occurs. Simply stated, child sexual abuse is defined as any adult interaction with a child for the purpose of meeting the sexual needs of an adult. Sexual abuse can be physical, verbal,

auditory, or visual and therefore does not necessarily require physical contact between the abuser and the child. For example, watching a child undress, take a shower, or go to the bathroom for the purpose of creating sexual arousal would be child sexual abuse. Other non-physical behaviors include an adult exposing his or her sexual organs to a child and speaking to a child about things of a sexual nature that are inappropriate for the child's age. Viewing, possessing, or distributing child pornography is criminal and is a form of sexual abuse that is becoming an increasing problem in our society.

All who know or suspect that a child (under age 18) is being abused are required by statute to report such abuse to the statewide hotline at

1-877-KYSAFE1
(1-877-597-2331)



CHFS

KENTUCKY
Cabinet for Health and
Family Services

MYTH V. FACT

Myth: Strangers are responsible for most child abuse.

Fact: Most child abuse, including sexual abuse, is perpetrated by someone known to the child.

Myth: Most sexual abusers are homosexuals.

Fact: Most sexual abusers are male, and the vast majority are heterosexual.

Myth: Children usually lie about sexual abuse.

Fact: The rate of false reporting, or lying, about sexual abuse is the same as the incidence of false reporting of any other type of crime.

Myth: Child sexual abuse is more widespread among Catholic clergy than other professions or religious communities.

Fact: There is no evidence that child sexual abuse is more or less common in any particular denomination or religion. All evidence suggests that the occurrence of sexual abuse remains the same across religious affiliations, socioeconomic status, or cultural groups.

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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.

AM I DOING THE RIGHT THING?

CORRECT RESPONSES

SCENARIO #1

If you said "no" you are correct. A best practice here is to create an email list using a church/school email address after receiving approval from the proper church/school administrator then notifying the parents this is how you will be communicating.

SCENARIO #2

Only if you obtained permission from the appropriate school/parish administrator prior to getting approval from parents are you compliant. In addition to the written parental permission you must get 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. You must also ensure there is an adequate number of adults present. A minimum of two adults must always be present during activities for minors.

SCENARIO #3

If you answered yes, you would be out of compliance. As stated in the policies and procedures manual provided at the training "Release young people only to parents or guardians, unless the parent or guardian has provided permission allowing release to another adult."

SCENARIO #4

If you said "no", you are correct. The Code of Conduct clearly states Refrain from giving inappropriate or expensive gifts to young people.

SCENARIO #5

If you said "no", you are correct. As stated in the Code of Conduct "Never use alcohol when engaged in ministering to minor."

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. Adhering to the policies and procedures presented in the Safe Environment workshops ensure employees and volunteers who work with young people are employing good sense and best practices in their ministries.

