Honor Thy Children

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

BACK TO SCHOOL AND CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION

It seems like we say the same thing every year, “I can’t believe it’s time to head back to school!” For many this is an exciting time as it means a new environment, friends, teachers and opportunities. Not on the minds of many is child sexual abuse. While the majority of children (and parents) feel safe at school and at school activities, it never hurts to ask if you’re doing everything you can to prevent abuse. If you are someone who is working with or volunteering children, are you fully aware of the policies and procedures of the Archdiocese of Louisville? Would you know what to do if a child came to you and told you they were being (or had been) abused?

All employees within the Archdiocese of Louisville (this includes schools and parishes) and those volunteers working regularly with children must attend a Safe Environment Training and have a background check not older than five years. But what if you’re simply a parent who isn’t volunteering but have children enrolled in a school or working with parish? What can you do to prevent child sexual abuse? Below are some helpful back to school tips that help parents feel empowered not afraid.

PREVENTING CHILD ABUSE IN A NEW SCHOOL YEAR

Stranger Danger Is A Myth. It is well known that 90% of child abuse occurs at the hands of someone the parents and child know and trust. As children encounter new persons of authority it’s imperative they know they have an open line of communication with you about anything.

Pick Up From A New Friend’s House. The Right Way. Don’t ask a child if they had a good time while the other parents are around. It’s better to offer your own thanks then ask your child when you’re alone together. If something did occur most children won’t disclose while the other parent is present.

Take Notice At Sports Activities. Talk with other parents about their experiences with the team. Show up at a random practice early or late and observe what goes on. Watch for grown ups who regularly isolate children for special tasks.

Ask The Right Questions. Don’t ask “How was your day?” This may signal to your child you really aren’t interested in anything but the surface detail. Try open ended questions such as “Who did you sit with?” or “What to you like best about your classroom or teacher?”

These are only a few of many helpful tips. Even if you’re not volunteering or working with children, if you have any questions or concerns regarding abuse, please feel free to reach out to our Office of Safe Environment at 502.636.1044.

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

Signs of Possible Sexual Abuse

- Unexplained pain, itching, redness or bleeding in the genital area
- Increased nightmares or bedwetting
- Withdrawn behavior
- Angry outbursts/mood swings
- Loss of appetite or difficulty swallowing
- Sudden/unexplained avoidance of certain places or people
- Sexual knowledge, language or behavior that is unusual for the child’s age.
**TYPES OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE OFFENDERS**

As you may (or may not know) anyone working regularly with children in the Archdiocese of Louisville must have a current background check not older than five years and have attended the Archdiocese of Louisville’s Safe Environment Training.

During this training participants learn how to recognize child sexual abuse, understand why it happens and what to do if they suspect abuse is occurring. One of the several items discussed in the training are the two types of child molesters and their characteristics. Below is a description of each.

**Preferential Child Molester**
- Pedophile
- Psychiatric diagnosis for persons whose sexual preference are for children before the age of puberty.
- Known to collect child pornography which they share locally, nationally and internationally.
- They often have multiple victims due to children aging out of their preference.
- Will often find children through electronic devices. The grooming process can begin online before the abuser may initiate a meeting.

**Situational Child Molester**
- Gets their sexual needs met through the child because the child is available.
- Sexual preference is not necessarily for children or teens.
- Abusers may include family members, people in the child’s social circle, older children and trusted family friends.
- The abuse may happen once or many times.

**UPCOMING TRAININGS**

A current list of trainings is always available at www.archlou.org/safe
All trainings are at 6:30p unless otherwise indicated.

8.7.19 (5:00 pm)
Holy Trinity (Louisville)

8.12.19
St. Gregory

8.26.19
St. Dominic

8.27.19
Holy Spirit (Louisville)

9.9.19
St. Nicholas Academy

9.16.19
St. Andrew Academy

9.19.19
St. Augustine (Lebanon)

10.21.19
St. Francis Xavier
Mt. Washington

More trainings are being scheduled for August and September and will be posted at www.archlou.org/safe

Keep checking this webpage for updates as trainings cancelled due to inclement weather will be posted here

**WHY LIVE TRAININGS?**

“I am just now leaving the Restoring Trust/Safe Environment workshop, and it was very helpful! The training was powerful and very impressive. The delivery was incredible, and the poise the speakers possess was inspiring. I had to give them a shout out!” – An attendee at a recent training.

Over 150 people attended a training during the summer break. That’s over 300 eyes looking out for our children in the Archdiocese. Even if you’re not currently working with children, but considering it make plans to join us at a training soon!

Honor Thy Children
MINIMIZING THE RISK FOR ABUSE WHEN YOU’RE IN A PINCH

We’ve all been there, we need someone to watch our kids and our regular sitter isn’t available, but someone we know, knows someone and you have no other choice but to hire someone you’ve never met. In a perfect world we would all love to check references and have a pre-sit down interview. Sometimes that’s simply not possible. So what can you do?

If your children have to be with someone new for the first time make it clear their interactions will be public, non-isolated and regulated as much as you can.

More importantly be clear with the babysitter and kids on what your expectations and rules are. Some best practices include preventing isolation. For example if it’s evening time, go on and give your kids a bath and get them ready for bed in advance.

Make a rule that doors are to be kept open at all times. Maybe designate certain rooms off limits. Make sure the new babysitter understands that you will be checking on the kids while you’re away. You might even consider circling back by the house while you’re supposed to be out.

Talk with your children in advance about appropriate personal boundaries. Ensure they know they can tell you if anyone makes them feel uncomfortable. Be sure to let the babysitter know that you’ve talked with your children about body safety and you don’t keep secrets from each other. This can be extremely effective in deterring abuse.

If the children are age appropriate and can text, consider a safe word they can text you if they feel uncomfortable. Talk with the new babysitter ahead of time. Ask them how they would respond to specific scenarios with kids. Make it clear you hired them as the babysitter and they should not allow others in the home while you’re away. Take this time to let them know who they may let in while you’re not there such as grandparents or a “safe neighbor”.

Be sure to talk with your children after the sitter leaves. Ask them what they did, what was fun, how did they feel, etc. Make sure they understand there will be no repercussions for their answers.

Finally, play the “what if?” game with your child. Ask them about different scenarios i.e. what if this happened, what would you do?

Most of us will always take the time to properly vet those who leave our children with, but for those rare times we simply can’t, following these simple procedures will go a long way in pre-

The long-term effects of child abuse are staggering. According to childhelp.org for new cases in 2008 alone, lifetime estimates of worker productivity, healthcare costs, special education costs, child welfare expenditures, and criminal justice expenditures added up to $124 billion. This could send 1.7 million kids to college.

MONTHLY SAFE ENVIRONMENT TIP

18 years old is a significant milestone in a young person’s life and many young people will be turning 18 this school year.

An often asked question is how an 18 year old is treated when it comes to Safe Environment compliance.

Anyone 16 and older may attend a Safe Environment Training, but a person has to be 18 to have a background check run.

For students who are 18 years old but still in high school they are to be treated as minors until they graduate from high school.

This means they cannot have a background check run, nor be left alone with children or placed in a supervisory role with children.

Once they graduate high school they are considered adults and can be placed in a supervisory role, but MUST HAVE completed the Safe Environment Training and have had a satisfactory background check completed.

Should you have any questions concerning your status, feel free to reach out to your parish/school Safe Environment Coordinator or Scott Fitzgerald Coordinator of Safe Environment Services (sfitzgerald@archlou.org) 502.471.2132
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 or the Pastoral Center at 502/585-3291.

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.

SELF PRODUCED SEXUAL IMAGERY: A WARNING

The Internet Watch Foundation is warning of a rise in “self produced sexual imagery” created by children between the ages of 11-15. The Foundation works with service providers to remove child sexual images found on the internet. Images of children being sexually abused were found nearly every five minutes last year. It’s highest ever findings. The majority of these images come from cell-phone cameras.

The danger of this of course is where these images end up. According to IWF, nearly 88% of images end up in videos and collections all over the world. Many of them are sold for money.

Last year the IWF found over 105,000 web addresses containing, having links to or advertising sexual abuse imagery, up over 75,000 from the year before. There are other ramifications to children who self produce images, such as embarrassment, stress, bullying, and an increased vulnerability to sexual exploitation.

So what can you do to help prevent your child from falling victim? Below are some helpful tips from childnet.com

Resist peer pressure: The creation of sexting content is quite often due to pressure from a partner or group. Discussing peer pressure with kids is a positive way to encourage them to take responsibility for their own actions and resist pressure from others to engage in activities they are uncomfortable with or know to be against the law.

Know the law: Although youth will be treated as victims in instances of sexting, it is important to educate them about how such behavior breaks the law, and the potential consequences.

Understand the consequences: Increasing your child’s awareness about what can happen after sexting content has left their control is very important in helping them to understand the effects that may have on their reputation and psychological wellbeing; both short term and long term.

Losing your inhibitions could lead to loss of control: The distribution of sexting content is often deliberate but can also happen in a less planned way, for example through spontaneity or peer pressure, or if a young person is under the influence of alcohol or drugs and their judgement is impaired. Remind kids that they have control over the images they create and share, but once they have shared that content, it is out of their control.

It’s never too late to tell someone: Encourage kids to speak to someone they trust if they are involved in a sexting incident. Although it may feel like the end of the world to a young person, there is always a way back. The quicker they speak to someone, the better the chance of managing the spread of the content.