



Honor Thy Children

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

WITH A NEW SCHOOL YEAR COMES COMPLIANCE

With a new school year comes a time to focus on meeting mandatory Safe Environment compliance. In 2011, the John Jay College of Criminal Justice of the City University of New York released a landmark study on The Causes and Context of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests in the United States, 1950-2010. In this report, the researchers supported the emphasis of the Church, since the passage of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, on zero tolerance of sexual abuse among priests and Church personnel, reporting sexual abuse to the authorities, transparency, promoting safe environments, and strengthening formation in seminaries. Though recognizing the progress that has been made, researchers also emphasized that these efforts must remain essential best practices and become routine responses. Organizational systemic change takes decades, and we cannot afford to become complacent about the need to improve. The Archdiocese of Louisville is committed to ensuring that children and youth who worship, study or participate in church-sponsored activities can do so in the safest and most

secure setting possible. In an effort to fulfill this commitment, all employees or volunteers who have contact with children or youth (18 and under) for ANY length of time are required to participate in one of the 2-hour Safe Environment Training Workshops. The Safe Environment Program will cover topics such as Identifying signs of child sexual abuse.



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Understanding the dynamics of child sexual abuse, including how children are groomed and how they may attempt to reveal their experience. How to act in response to child sexual abuse, including obligation to report and caring for the abused child. Becoming familiar with new archdiocesan policies and Code of Conduct regarding work with children. Participants will receive a copy of the new Sexual Abuse Policies and a resource manual. No registration is necessary. Sign-in sheets will be available at the workshops. The following is important to remember. Children under the age of 16 will

not be permitted into any Safe Environment Training due to the nature of the material discussed. It is advisable to arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the workshop's start time listed for all locations to complete the paperwork. Attendees must remain present for the entire workshop. Leaving early will result in having to attend the Safe

Archdiocese of
Louisville

**AUGUST
2023**

**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

**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!

RISKS TO DISCLOSING CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

There are genuine risks to the child when she or he discloses, including the lack of protection for the child if he or she is not believed, or when removal of a child from an abusive situation does not take place in a timely fashion. Moreover, when children are protected and removed from the home, they feel punished, which serves to reinforce the shame and misplaced responsibility that the child feels for causing the abuse. To a child, being removed and placed with strangers (even with relatives) seems like punishment, further reinforcing the ideas that "I am bad," "I am to blame", and/or "I should have kept quiet."

Furthermore, when children are removed from their home, they are taken from their community. They no longer participate in any youth activities, club outings, sporting competitions, and other extracurricular activities. This is experienced as

additional punishment for their disclosure. These feelings are compounded when adults are angry, and children are silenced from talking about the very matter that caused them to be pulled from their community.

Another risk for the child is the probable loss of the relationship to the abuser. Children who are abused usually have mixed feelings about their abuser. The child hates the offending actions but still cares for the person who is abusing him or her. There are cases where the abuser is the primary financial supporter of the family and disclosing may result in the family losing economic support. In such cases, the abused child often internalizes blame believing that "if I didn't tell, we wouldn't be in such a mess." Know that in general, a child who is being abused feels a desire to protect others in the home—including other siblings and the non-abusing parent. If the

abusing parent gets removed, the child may internalize the responsibility for the pain that the non-abusing parent feels.

Family members vary in their responses to a child's disclosure. They have varying degrees of believing and supporting the child for many reasons, including the fact that the abuser is most often a relative or family friend. Coming to terms with the idea that someone we know and respect could sexually abuse a child is difficult for people. To the child, this ambivalence feels like he or she is not being believed. It is not uncommon for some family members to reject the child's story and side with the abuser. This is particularly devastating to a child when a parent/guardian refuses to believe that the abuse actually happened.

UPCOMING TRAININGS



Safe Environment Trainings are back with the start of the new school year!

9.5.23

Holy Spirit (Louisville)

9.6.23

Holy Trinity (Louisville)

9.18.23

St. Patrick

9.25.23

St. Andrew Academy

We are scheduling additional trainings for October and November, but it is strongly advised that you not wait to attend a scheduled in person training if required to do so as trainings are subject to cancellation or postponement due to inclement weather.

Be sure to bookmark www.archlou.org/safe for the latest status or changes in any training

Should any training be postponed or cancelled at the last minute, notice will be sent to the parish/school Safe Environment Coordinator and posted here

IMPORTANT

Due to the nature of material presented **NO child under the age of 16 will be admitted to any training**



SUPPORT FOR CAREGIVERS

Offer support to the caregivers (parent/guardians) of the abused child. The caregiver is probably hearing these allegations for the first time and will likely be very distressed. Caregivers will feel a great deal of guilt, anger, confusion, pain, and betrayal. Inform them as to what you know and have done. Listen to their fears and concerns and assist them by providing the names of community resources.

If one of the caregivers is the one alleged to have abused the child, he or she will be defensive and angry. Do not confront the alleged caregiver about the abuse. Allow law enforcement personnel and investigators to handle this. Your responsibility is to ensure the safety of the child.

BYSTANDER AWARENESS MONTH

In a world where children are exposed to various situations, nurturing empathy and a sense of responsibility is crucial. August is Bystander Awareness Month and offers a prime opportunity for parents to engage their children in conversations about standing up against bullying and injustice.

Let's explore the significance of this month and how parents can encourage their children to become active bystanders.

UNDERSTANDING

Bystander Awareness Month reminds us that bystanders have a pivotal role in shaping their environment. Bystanders are those who witness incidents but are not directly involved. The goal of this observance is to motivate individuals, particularly children, to move beyond passivity and take action to promote respect, kindness, and inclusivity.

CONVERSATIONS

Initiating conversations about bystander awareness is crucial. Encourage your children to share their thoughts and experiences, and listen without judgment. By fostering open communication, you create a safe space for your children to express their feelings and concerns.

EMPATHY

Empathy is central to effective bystander intervention. Help your children develop empathy by encouraging them to understand others' perspectives. Share stories that highlight the emotions and challenges others might be facing. By nurturing empathy, you empower your children to connect with those who may be targets of bullying or discrimination.

INCLUSION

Creating an environment of inclusivity and kindness at home is key. Encourage your children to befriend individuals from diverse backgrounds and embrace differences. Share stories of those who have made positive changes by standing up for others.

EXAMPLE

Children learn by observing. Model the behavior you want them to adopt. Be kind, respectful, and compassionate in your interactions.

Bystander Awareness Month empowers parents to nurture their children's ability to make a positive impact. Through empathy, practical strategies, and promoting kindness, parents can raise a generation of compassionate individuals.



This courtesy of our partners at the "Face It Movement" which launched in 2013 as an initiative led by Kosair Charities in response to the number of child abuse deaths in the Commonwealth.

For more information visit faceitabuse.org

MONTHLY SAFE ENVIRONMENT TIP



All persons working with children must complete an initial in person training at any of the Archdiocese of Louisville scheduled trainings. After that, a person is required to complete a five-year refresher training either online or any of the in-person trainings.

If you've completed the in-person training and would like to pursue the online option for your refresher, please see your parish/school Safe Environment Coordinator so they can confirm your initial in person attendance and give you instructions for completing the online refresher.

Should you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to your school/parish Safe Environment Coordinator.

If you don't know who that is contact

Scott Fitzgerald
Archdiocese of Louisville
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.

ARE YOU COMPLIANT WITH THE CODE OF CONDUCT?

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.

Below are some examples taken from the "Honor Thy Children" Safe Environment Code of Conduct reviewed at the mandatory in person training. While just a sample, these are 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.



- Avoid being alone with a minor in a residence, rectory, sleeping facility, locker room, rest room, dressing facility, or other closed rooms.
- Avoid driving alone in a vehicle with a young person.
- 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 take an overnight trip alone with a minor.
- Ensure that all activities (extracurricular, catechetical, youth ministry, scouting, athletics, etc.) for which I am responsible have been approved in advance by the appropriate administrator.
- Never participate in chat rooms or video chats with minors unless they have been created for a particular ministry or employment related circumstance. See the social media guidelines for the Archdiocese of Louisville for more detailed information about the use of social media.
- 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.
- 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.