

Requirements of the Safe Environment Program

Following procedures will be followed:

- A screening form must be completed.
- Employment application must be completed for paid positions.
- References will be checked.
- Interview—Each new applicant will be interviewed and a written record retained.
- Criminal Background check will be conducted.
- “Family of Faith” the initial Diocesan training and everyone must attend in person. Yearly update training can be on-line or in person.
- Safe Environment Program must be read and an acknowledgement form signed.
- Computer/internet policy must be read and signed by employees.

All children in the Diocesan education programs, Catholic Schools and Faith Formation, will be encouraged to participate in the “Safe Touch” program. Safe Touch Programs are educational programs that teach children how to protect themselves from being sexually abused. Age appropriate programs have been implemented throughout the diocese.



Reporting Procedures

Individuals must report incidents of abuse or suspicions of sexual misconduct, or harassment. All situations involving abuse of minors must be reported to the:

**Texas Department of Family
and Protective Services
1-800-252-5400
In an emergency call
911**

It is the policy of the Diocese of Dallas not only to fulfill the reporting law but to cooperate fully with the investigating civil authorities.

Individuals with knowledge about violations of Diocesan policy should call the:

Chancellor
or the
Safe Environment Director
At
214-379-2800

write to them at the:

Diocese of Dallas
P.O. Box 190507
Dallas, TX
75219

A report to the Diocese does not relieve the individual from reporting abuse as required by Texas State Law.



Catholic Diocese of Dallas

Safe Environment Program



Mission Statement

As Christian adults, we have a moral and legal responsibility and are entrusted by God with the spiritual, emotional and physical well-being of minors and vulnerable adults. As they participate in activities within or sponsored by our Diocese, our parishes and our schools, it is our responsibility and commitment to provide an environment which is safe and nurturing.

Step 1: Know the Warning Signs

Knowing the warning signs means that we can recognize the early signs of an inappropriate relationship with a child. If we know the warning signs, then we can identify potential abuse before it happens. If we know the warning signs, we do not have to rely on a child to report an incident. Be cautious of an individual who:

- Discourages other adults from participating or monitoring.
- Always wants to be alone with children.
- More excited to be with children than with adults.
- Gives gifts to kids, often without permission.
- Goes overboard touching.
- Always want to wrestle or tickle.
- Thinks the rules do not apply to them.
- Allows children to engage in activities their parents would not allow.
- Uses bad language or tells dirty jokes.
- Shows children pornography.



Step 2: Control Access

Controlling access means that we are careful about whom we allow to work with our children. It also sends a message to potential child sexual abuse.

- Communicate the Church's commitment to keeping children safe.
- Use written standard applications.
- Require criminal background checks.
- Complete face to face interviews.
- Check references.

Step 3: Monitor all Programs

Child molesters look for ways to spend time alone with children. If they know someone is watching they have more trouble finding opportunities to abuse without getting caught.

- Identify secluded area, lock empty rooms.
- Staff should check bathrooms before sending children in alone.
- Do not permit children to enter staff-only areas.
- Only meet with children where other adults can pass by you.
- Supervisors should look in on activities.
- Always have two cleared adults present.
- Allow parents to drop in on programs.
- Make sure new programs are approved by the appropriate administration (school, religious education, and parish.)

Step 4: Be Aware

Being aware means that parents should know what is going on in the lives of their own children and pay attention to subtle signs of a problem. Parents should talk to their children, listen to them, and observe them. When we observe and communicate with our children, we are more likely to detect the signs if they are in danger. We can notice a sudden change in behavior, if they get moody or aggressive, lose interest in school, or stop taking care of their personal hygiene

- Talk to your children.
- Listen to your children.
- Observe your children.
- Let your children know they can tell you anything.
- Teach your children where their private parts are.



- Talk to your children often about protecting themselves.
- Teach your children how to protect themselves
- Teach your children what to do if someone tries to touch them.
- Teach your children what to do if someone makes them uncomfortable.

Step 5: Communicate Your Concerns

Communicating concerns means telling someone when you are uncomfortable with a situation or if you suspect abuse. It means paying attention to your own feelings and not waiting until it is too late. Only by communicating concerns can we use our knowledge to protect children. Even if abuse is not occurring, it is important to let others know when you have concerns.

Call the child abuse hotline at:

**1- 800-252-5400
or Call 911**



Catholic Diocese of Dallas
3725 Blackburn
P.O. Box 190507
Dallas, TX 75219

Phone: 214-379-2812
E-mail: blandregan@cathdal.org