

Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee

**Protection and
Prevention
Through Respect**

Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee
Protection and Prevention through Respect

PROVINCE OF MIAMI POLICY ON
SAFE ENVIRONMENT EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Approved by Bishops, December 5, 2005

I. SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMS

The Province of Miami, in an effort to ensure the safety of our children, and in compliance with Article 12 of the National Charter for the Protection of Children, has adopted the following policies regarding the education of children, youth and parents, in topics pertaining to Safe Environment Programs. Each diocese in the Province "...will cooperate with parents, civil authorities, educators, and community organizations to provide education and training" for children, youth and their parents/guardians about ways to make and maintain a safe environment for children and youth.

[cf. Model Policy and Procedural Guidelines for the Province of Miami Relating to Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults-Part IV F (Safe Environment Programs), December 6, 2004]

Note: This policy comports with and does not replace or supersede any others covered by the full scope of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Youth.

II. IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY IN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

A. Parents/Guardians: It is critical that awareness be raised among adults, particularly the parents/guardians of children and youth about the nature and scope of the problem of sexual abuse, keeping in mind that the Church has always affirmed that parents have the duty and the right to be the first and the primary educators of their children. Each parish and school shall provide an opportunity for parents/guardians to take part in an educational program in the prevention, recognition and reporting of sexual abuse of children and youth. This program shall be provided periodically in a systematic fashion throughout the diocese and shall include the following guidelines to assist parents/guardians in their important role:

1. Nature of the problem of sexual abuse
2. How boundaries are established and/or violated
3. Guidelines for teaching children about boundaries (safe touch)
4. Signs and symptoms of sexual abuse in children and youth
5. Prevention of sexual abuse
6. Law, policies and procedures for reporting allegations of sexual abuse

B. Children and Youth: It is critical that we educate our children and young people regarding their personal safety. Age appropriate information shall be provided to all children and youth involved in Catholic Schools, Parish Religious Education and Youth Ministry Programs in the diocese. This information must include at minimum the following topics:

1. A sense of self worth and essential God given human dignity
2. A respect for one's body as gift from God
3. Personal safety
4. Safe friends, safe adults, safe touching
5. Healthy/Unhealthy relationships
6. Seeking assistance from a trusted adult
7. Procedures for reporting

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Principles for Child/Youth Protection Catechesis

- ❖ Each person is uniquely made in the image and likeness of God. God is love; therefore, each person is made in the image of love and created to act in love.
- ❖ God lives in a family or a community that we call the Blessed Trinity. Persons are created to live in community, the smallest and most intimate of which is family. Family, in God's image, respects and cherishes the uniqueness and life of each of its members. The Church, school and parish are partners with the family in educating, nurturing and protecting children.
- ❖ Each person has dignity and must be treated with respect. We show our respect for each other in our language, behavior, and interactions with each other. Caring, concern and empathy for each other must be a hallmark of our lives as followers of Jesus. Because of the dignity of each person, our right to respect includes the right to the respect of our own bodies.
- ❖ Touch is an integral part of being human. Touch can be safe, unsafe or unwanted. Safe touch, appropriate physical affection, is that kind of touch, which is good for the person's body, makes one feel cared for, loved and important. Unsafe and unwanted touch makes a person feel uncomfortable and unhappy.
- ❖ God has blessed every person with the gift of choice. Some bad choices affect a number of people negatively. Suffering, which is not willed by God and is not the fault of innocent persons, is the result of those bad choices.
- ❖ Some actions or behaviors are wrong or sinful. Some actions or behaviors between adults, between adults and children, and between children are wrong. Behavior that harms self or others physically, psychologically, emotionally, or spiritually is wrong.
- ❖ There are good secrets and bad secrets. There is good play and bad play. We can share good secrets and good play experiences and we must avoid bad secrets and bad play experiences.
- ❖ Good and loving human relationships and friendships can help us understand ourselves, God and others. Some people misuse friendships and harm others.
- ❖ The various means of social communication are good when used properly. We do not share personal information in any form of communication. We do not use means of social communication to injure anyone or their reputation.
- ❖ Every person has the right to be safe. Children have the right to be protected from anything and anyone who may harm them. Adults have the responsibility to make the environment in which children live as safe as possible. That includes teaching children and young people proper, adequate coping and safety skills that will enable them to be safe and healthy.
- ❖ Parents, teachers and catechists have the responsibility to assist children to identify a number of people in their lives to whom they can talk openly and honestly. Children must be taught that if help is not received, to keep telling other trusted adults until someone helps them.

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Basic reasons for Teaching Protection and Prevention

- Include Church teaching/integrate faith into the subject of abuse
- Support parents in educating their children with regard to being and keeping safe
- Pervasiveness of child sexual abuse
- Effects of abuse on children and youth
- Focus on dissemination of factual information about abuse
- Pervasiveness of abuse through the internet
- Pervasiveness of abuse through bullying

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Curriculum for Protection and Prevention through Respect Sessions

Yearly Curriculum: Rotate the Focus over the Three Years

Grades PreK

Focus is the same each year

- good touch and bad touch and good and bad secrets
- telling trusted adult
- other safety issues

Grades Kindergarten – Grade 2

1. Forms of abuse and protecting self
 - Good and bad touch and good and bad secrets
 - Identifying abusers and ways they groom
 - Telling a trusted adult
2. Safe use of the internet
 - E-mails, google searching, YouTube videos, etc.
 - Not giving personal information
 - Telling a trusted adult
3. Bullying
 - Are you a bully?
 - Are you being bullied
 - What do you do when someone else is being bullied?
 - How to be a good friend
 - Telling a trusted adult

Grades 3-5

1. Forms of abuse and protecting self
 - Identifying abusers and ways they groom
 - Telling a trusted adult
 - Responding to situations that make them uncomfortable
2. Safe use of social media
 - E-mails
 - Not giving personal information
 - Use of websites
 - Telling a trusted adult
3. Bullying
 - Are you a bully?
 - Are you being bullied
 - What do you do when someone else is being bullied?
 - Telling a trusted adult

Grades 6-8

1. Forms of abuse and protecting themselves including relationships
 - Identifying abusers and ways they groom
 - Healthy relationships
 - Telling a trusted adult
 - Responding to situations that make them uncomfortable
2. Safe use of social media
 - E-mails
 - Not giving personal information
 - Use of websites
 - Do not go to meet anyone from online chat room, etc.
 - Telling a trusted adult
3. Bullying
 - Are you a bully?
 - Are you being bullied
 - What do you do when someone else is being bullied?
 - Forms of bullying: verbal, cyber,
 - Telling a trusted adult

Yearly Curriculum: Rotate the Focus over the Three Years

Grades 9-12

Rotate the focus

1. Identifying predators and grooming and abuse
2. Dating violence and setting boundaries
 - Telling a trusted adult
3. Bullying
 - Are you a bully?
 - Are you being bullied
 - What do you do when someone else is being bullied?
 - Forms of bullying
 - Telling a trusted adult
4. Online predators and using social media safely
 - Internet Safety
 - Sexting
 - Do not go to meet with anyone from an online group
 - Human Trafficking
 - Telling a trusted adult

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Guidelines for Each Stage

Preschool

- Explain the importance of reporting abuse until they are believed (for self and others)
- Discuss that they have parts of their bodies that are considered private and to respect these in self and other
- Learn that all children are persons of worth and their bodies belong to them
- Describe the difference between good touch and bad touch
- Realize that they are loved persons who are deserving of respect
- Describe verbal abuse and distinguish it from correction
- Verify that most correction and punishment is not abuse
- Discuss who to go to for help if they are abused
- Explain strategies to protect one self
- Decide that it is all right to say no
- Determining who are the trusted adults and telling them

Kindergarten through Grade 2

- Explain that importance of reporting abuse until they are believed (for self and others)
- Discuss that they have parts of their bodies that are considered private and to respect these in self and others
- Describe the differences between good touch and bad touch
- Describe and discuss warning signs of abusers
- Realize that they are loved persons who are deserving of respect
- Verify that most correction and punishment is not abuse
- Explain strategies to protect oneself
- Discuss to whom they should go for help if they are abused
- Learn that each person's body is a temple of the Holy Spirit
- Learn that all children are persons of worth and their bodies belong to them
- Define physical abuse and how they can deal with it.
- Discuss proper use of e-mail
- Discuss proper use of the internet and what to do if they come upon a site that makes them feel uncomfortable
- Discuss verbal abuse and how they can deal with it
- Discuss both physical and verbal bullying
- Discuss what they should do if they or others are being bullied
- Determining who are the trusted adults and telling them

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Guidelines for Each Stage

Grades 3 – 5

- Explain the importance of reporting abuse until they are believed (for self and others)
- Discuss that they have parts of their bodies that are considered private and to respect these in self and others.
- Realize that they are loved persons who are deserving of respect.
- Define emotional abuse and name concrete courses of action to take if they experience it.
- Describe strategies to get out of abusive or potentially abusive situations.
- Discuss to whom they should go for help if they are abused
- Explain the consequences of false reporting of abuse.
- Understand that people who are abused often become abusive.
- Discuss proper use of e-mail
- Discuss proper use of the internet and what to do if they come upon a site that makes them feel uncomfortable
- Discuss verbal abuse and how they can deal with it
- Discuss both physical and verbal bullying
- Discuss what they should do if they or others are being bullied
- Determining who are the trusted adults and telling them

Grades 6-8

- Explain the importance of reporting abuse until they are believed (for self and others)
- Realize that they are loved persons who are deserving of respect.
- Define physical abuse and how they can deal with it.
- Explain strategies to protect one self.
- Describe sexual abuse and learn ways to deal with it.
- Describe verbal abuse and distinguish it from correction.
- Verify that most correction and punishment is not abuse.
- Define emotional abuse and name concrete courses of action to take if they experience it.
- Describe strategies to get out of abusive or potentially abusive situations.
- Explain the consequences of false reporting of abuse.
- Understand that people who are abused often become abusive
- Discuss proper use of e-mail
- Discuss proper use of the internet and what to do if they come upon a site that makes them feel uncomfortable
- Discuss sexting and the consequences
- Discuss verbal abuse and how they can deal with it
- Discuss both physical and verbal bullying
- Discuss what they should do if they or others are being bullied
- Determining who are the trusted adults and telling them

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Guidelines for Each Stage

Grades 9-12

- Explain the importance of reporting abuse until they are believed (for self and others)
- Reinforce the privacy zones
- Discuss acceptable and unacceptable social relationships
- Discuss appropriate and inappropriate physical conduct and contact
- Explain how to recognize the seductive techniques of sexual abusers.
- Reinforce that they are to challenge adults and authority figures who make them feel uncomfortable or unsafe
- Reinforce that no personal information is to be given over the internet, in chat rooms, or Instant Messages
- Focus on kindness online towards others – respecting other people in pictures and words.
- Reinforce the dangers of pornography
- Explain that they are to report immediately any concerns for their safety
- Discuss appropriate and inappropriate activity (body rubbing, fondling, kissing) and sexual behavior
- Instill self-esteem and self-confidence
- Remind teenagers that sexual abusers are clever, appear kind, and will entice teenagers through clever techniques
- Discuss proper use of e-mail
- Discuss proper use of the internet and what to do if they come upon a site that makes them feel uncomfortable
- Discuss sexting and the consequences
- Discuss verbal abuse and how they can deal with it
- Discuss both physical and verbal bullying
- Discuss what they should do if they or others are being bullied
- Discuss human trafficking
- Determining who are the trusted adults and telling them

**Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee
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Resources

Speakers

Personnel from your local Sheriff Office.

Personnel from your local Police Department

Diocesan Resource Library

See attached sheets with lists of materials by levels

On-line Resources

See attached sheet with list of resources

What Parents Can Do to Protect Children and Youth from Abuse

See attached list.