

ST. JOSEPH'S POLICY FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Introduction:

Over the last several years St. Joseph's Parish has been at the forefront in the area of the prevention of sexual abuse. Fr. Thomas Radaich established the Child Protection Task Force in 2002, at a time when we were experiencing the onslaught of the fallout from all the sexual abuse in the Church and the bishops' failure to respond.

St. Joseph's Policy for the Protection of Children and Young People was written to complement the policy of the Diocese of Duluth, *Sexual Misconduct Policy and Code of Pastoral conduct*. These policies are to be viewed as supportive of each other. They should not be viewed as an either/or, but both/and!

I strongly recommend that you sign the appropriate papers for the Diocese of Duluth, but that you also read and sign the parish policy. It fills in some of the gaps that were not addressed by the diocesan policy relative to reporting, etc. With the efforts of all we can make this a safe community and world for our children and young adults.

Fr. Jerry Weiss, pastor of St. Joseph's Catholic Community, Grand Rapids, MN

January 21, 2010

**ST. JOSEPH’S POLICY FOR THE PROTECTION OF
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**
St. Joseph’s Catholic Community, Grand Rapids, MN August, 2004

Purpose Statement

“As a church, we are called to share the richness of our faith and tender care of Jesus with our brothers and sisters. At the same time, we are also called to challenge each other to witness in our personal lives the values and attitudes of the Gospel. Our task is to lead others to fullness of life in God. We must ensure that our position of trust never be violated by victimizing those who look to us for guidance.” “...May the Spirit of God guide us in our diocese so that all our actions be performed in charity and justice.”

Archbishop Roger L. Schwietz, OMI

In cases of child sexual abuse, strangers account for less than 8% of the abusers. The other 92% of the time, the abuser is a trusted adult who has an ongoing relationship with the child but who is misusing his/her authority. (*Interagency Task Force, January 2002*)

It is the intent of the leadership of St. Joseph’s Catholic Community, Grand Rapids, to raise the awareness of the parish of this problem; to institute screening and supervision procedures for staff and volunteers; and to establish a clear reporting line to be used by anyone suspecting misconduct in this area. Together, we will be able to reduce the risk of child sexual abuse in our church. (These policies are consistent with the *Diocese of Duluth, Sexual Misconduct Policy and Code of Pastoral Conduct, May 2003*)

II. Definition of Sexual Abuse

- A. “Sexual Abuse” is defined in Statute 626.556, Subd.2 (a) as meaning the subjection of a child to sexual activity by a person responsible for the child’s care, or by a person in a position of authority. It includes threatened sexual abuse.
- B. Child sexual abuse is any sexual activity with a child – whether in the home by a caretaker, in a day care situation, a foster/residential setting, or in any other setting, including on the street by a person unknown to the child. The abuser may be an adult, an adolescent, or another child.
- C. “Touching” child sexual abuse includes:
 - 1. Fondling
 - 2. Oral, genital, and anal penetration
 - 3. Intercourse
 - 4. Forcible rape
- D. “Non-Touching” child sexual abuse includes:
 - 1. Verbal comments
 - 2. Pornographic videos
 - 3. Obscene phone calls
 - 4. Exhibitionism
 - 5. Allowing children to witness sexual activity

III. Sexual and Physical Abuse Symptoms

A. Unusual Physical Signs

1. Lacerations and bruises
2. Nightmares
3. Irritation, pain, or injury to the genital area
4. Difficulty with urination
5. Discomfort when sitting
6. Torn or bloody underclothing
7. Venereal disease

B. Unusual Behavioral Signs

1. Excessive anxiety or unusual behavior approaching church, nursery or class room.
2. Nervousness or hostility toward adults
3. Sexual self-consciousness
4. "Acting Out" sexual behavior
5. Sudden, unexplainable withdrawal from usual activities and friends

C. Unusual Verbal Signs

1. "I don't like (a particular person)."
2. "(Person) does things to me when we're alone."
3. "I don't like to be alone with (Person)."
4. "(Person) fooled around with me."

IV. Selection Criteria for Staff and Volunteers at St. Joseph's Catholic Community

- A.** All staff and volunteers are required to read "*Sexual Misconduct Policy and Code of Pastoral Conduct*" of the Diocese of Duluth (Revised May 2003) and sign the acknowledgement form.
- B.** A background check will be done for all staff. Volunteers who have significant interaction with minors will have a background check in conformance with the Diocesan Policy (Revised May 2003). Any applicants with criminal abuse violations in their past will not under any circumstances be permitted to work with children or youth.
- C.** Complete the Diocese of Duluth "Online Youth Protection Training". Refer to Addendum #1 in the diocesan manual. This training is also available in video format.

V. Behavioral Parameters for Staff and Volunteers

- A.** Any behavior within the child sexual abuse definition is strictly forbidden.
- B.** All meetings and activities will take place within a room that has an unobstructed door window or opened door.

- C. “In rare, emergency situations, when accommodation is necessary for the health and well-being of the youth, the clergy, staff or volunteer should take extraordinary care to protect all parties from the appearance of impropriety and from all risk of harm. Use a team approach to managing emergency situations.” *(Diocese of Duluth, Sexual Misconduct Policy and Code Of Pastoral Conduct, May 2003)*
- D. Nursery and preschool children should only be released to a properly identified and pre-authorized adult.
- D. Any social networking with youth is strongly discouraged; examples include e-mails, texting, Facebook and MySpace. Discuss any exceptions or questions with supervisors.
- F. Program Directors shall provide supervision to ensure that the above parameters for staff and volunteers are being followed.

VI. Intervention and Reporting Obligations/Procedures for Volunteers, Staff, Supervisors and Clergy.

A. Intervention.

1. Any inappropriate conduct, or disclosure of same, between a volunteer or staff member and a child or youth should be taken seriously, confronted and immediately reported. The accused should not be confronted until the safety of the child or youth has been secured.
2. Clear violations of the policy should be stopped immediately by the observer.

B. Reporting.

Any personnel (including volunteers, staff, supervisors and clergy) who knows or has reason to believe an incident of sexual abuse of a child or youth has occurred and is related to programs of St. Joseph's, shall report as follows:

1. A verbal report of the incident shall be made immediately to the appropriate supervisor (as determined below) AND as soon as reasonably possible, form ICHS-0100 Suspected Child Abuse/Neglect Report (copy attached) must be completed and filed with local authorities. The appropriate supervisor for St. Joseph's School is the principal and for St. Joseph's Church, the pastor.
2. In the case where the accusation is made against the “appropriate supervisor” see VIII below.

VII. Who Must Report? (pursuant to Minn. Stat. 626.556, subd. 3 and subd. 5)

Professional or professional delegate who is engaged in practice of the healing arts, social service, hospital administration, psychological or psychiatric treatment, child care, law enforcement, or employed as a member of clergy.

The law requires mandated reporters to report suspected abuse situations immediately, to be followed by a written report within 72 hours.

Any person may voluntarily report to the local welfare agency, police department, or county sheriff if the person knows, has reason to believe or suspects a child is being or has been subjected to physical or sexual abuse.

Either law enforcement officers or child protection workers have the authority to interview the child on school property without the knowledge or consent of the parents.

Any person who makes a report shall, upon request to the local welfare agency, receive a concise summary of the disposition of the report, unless release would be detrimental to the best interest of the child.

Any person required by this section to report suspected physical or sexual child abuse or neglect who willfully fails to do so shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

VIII. Intervention and Reporting Obligations/Procedures for Incidents involving Supervisors and Clergy.

A. Intervention.

1. Any inappropriate conduct, or disclosure of same, between a supervisor or clergy and a child or youth, should be taken seriously, confronted and immediately reported. The accused should not be confronted until the safety of the child or youth has been secured.
2. Clear violations of the policy should be stopped immediately by the observer.

B. Reporting. Any volunteer or staff who knows or has reason to believe an incident of sexual abuse of a child or youth has occurred by a supervisor or clergy member, shall report as follows*:

1. Report suspected abuse immediately by completing and filing with local authorities form ICHS-0100 Suspected Child Abuse/Neglect Report (copy attached). A copy of said completed form must be sent to the pastor and the Vicar General or his designate.
2. The Vicar General or his designate shall notify the Bishop of the Diocese, the Independent Investigator and the Review Board of the alleged incident.

3. As diocesan policy states, the Vicar General will report any allegation of sexual abuse of a child to the appropriate public authorities and will support and advise all alleged victims of their right to make a report to the public authorities.

*Unless to do so would violate priest/penitent relationship of the Sacrament of Reconciliation or other communication deemed privileged under Minnesota law.

This policy will be updated as necessary according to diocesan revisions and State of Minnesota statutes.

Providing a safe environment for children includes the knowledge and use of the following:

1. Diocese of Duluth Sexual Misconduct Policy and Code of Pastoral Conduct, May 2003.
2. Background checks for all personnel and volunteers working with youth.
3. Youth Protection Training
4. St. Joseph's Policy for the Protection of Children and Young People

Policy approved by St. Joseph's Pastoral Council, September 26, 2004

Policy approved by St. Joseph's School Board, September 22, 2004

Policy revised January 21, 2010:

Reviewed by St. Joseph's School Board, March 17, 2010

Recommended to the pastor for approval by St. Joseph's Pastoral Council,

June 22, 2010

**Acknowledgement and Receipt of St. Joseph's Policy for the Protection
of Children and Young People**

The undersigned acknowledges receipt of the St. Joseph's Policy for the Protection of Children and Young People dated January 2010. I have read the policy, and I understand my rights and obligations pursuant to the policy. I agree to abide by the terms of the policy. I understand that if I have any questions regarding the policy, now or in the future, I should direct my questions to the appropriate supervisor, the pastor or the principal.

Signature

Printed Name

Date Signed

Ministry Position