



200.10

■ POLICY

□ GUIDELINE

YOUTH PROTECTION

POLICY REGARDING CIVILIAN CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS AND CHILD PROTECTION TRAINING FOR EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS IN THE DIOCESE OF COLUMBUS

Clergy, Employees, and Applicants to Clerical Formation

All clergy serving in the Diocese of Columbus; all parish, school, and diocesan employees; and all applicants to formation for the priesthood or permanent diaconate, regardless of their level of contact with children and youth, are required to complete a civilian criminal background check and participate in a *Protecting God's Children* training session. This policy is applicable to lay employees, professed religious, clergy, and clergy candidates.

Catholic School Volunteers and Volunteers in Parish Programs/Ministries for Children and Youth

Every volunteer in a program or ministry for children and youth, regardless of their level of contact with children and youth, is required to complete a civilian criminal background check and participate in a *Protecting God's Children* training session. Duration of service does not mitigate compliance with this policy.

Examples: Catholic School volunteers, Parish School of Religion (PSR) volunteers, youth ministry volunteers, field-trip chaperones and drivers, Scout leaders, coaches and other recreation volunteers, Vacation Bible School volunteers, Children's Liturgy of the Word volunteers, pre-school volunteers, nursery volunteers

Volunteers Working with Children and Youth in Other Parish Programs/Ministries

Volunteers for other parish programs or ministries who have been delegated care, custody, or control of children and youth are required to complete a criminal background check and participate in a *Protecting God's Children* training session. Duration of service does not mitigate compliance with this policy.

Examples: Parish festival volunteers staffing activities for children/youth, volunteer choir director (if choir includes children and/or youth), service coordinators (if service programs include children or youth)



200.10 (Cont'd)

■ POLICY

□ GUIDELINE

YOUTH PROTECTION

Other Parish Volunteers and Adults

Although they are not required to do so by diocesan policy, the Diocese of Columbus strongly encourages all other parish volunteers to complete civilian criminal background checks and attend *Protecting God's Children* training sessions. All parents and other interested adults are encouraged to attend a *Protecting God's Children* training session. The safety of children and young people is best assured when all adults have been trained and understand how to build a safe environment for children.

Examples: Lectors, ushers, festival workers, choir members, and so forth.

Civilian Criminal Background Checks for New Clergy, Parish Employees, Parish and School Volunteers, and Applicants to Clerical Formation

Civilian criminal background checks are completed through the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation (BCII) and must be completed by the first day of one's incardination (for a priest or deacon arriving to serve in this diocese from another diocese), employment, or service to the parish or school. Anyone formally applying to be a candidate for the priesthood or permanent diaconate must have a completed criminal background check completed through the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation (BCII) prior to acceptance into formal formation. Anyone who has not been a legal resident of Ohio for the past consecutive 5-years is required to complete a Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) civilian criminal background check. An FBI civilian criminal background check must at least be in process by the first day of one's employment or service to the parish or school.

Copies or transfers of completed civilian criminal background checks are only accepted from one parish or school in the Diocese of Columbus to another parish or school in the Diocese of Columbus. Copies of completed civilian background checks from individuals or other institutions are not acceptable.

A new background check must be conducted if a cleric, employee, volunteer, or clerical candidate has a significant (more than 1½ years) gap in their employment, service, or formation in the diocese.



200.10 (Cont'd)

■ POLICY

□ GUIDELINE

YOUTH PROTECTION

Civilian Criminal Background Checks for Catholic School Employees

All Catholic school employees must complete civilian criminal background checks conducted by both the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation (BCII) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). These checks must be completed every five years.

Disqualifying Offenses

Parishes and schools should exercise prudence when reviewing any offenses that are identified by a civilian criminal background check. Offenses that would prevent someone from serving in programs and ministries with children or youth include, but are not limited to:

- Abduction
- Aggravated assault
- Aggravated burglary
- Aggravated menacing
- Aggravated murder; specific intent to cause death
- Aggravated robbery
- Assault
- Burglary
- Carrying concealed weapons
- Child enticement
- Child stealing
- Compelling prostitution
- Contributing to the unruliness or delinquency of a child
- Corrupting another with drugs
- Corruption of a minor
- Disseminating matter harmful to juveniles
- Domestic violence
- Endangering children
- Failing to provide for functionally impaired person
- Felonious assault
- Felonious sexual penetration
- Funding of drug or marijuana trafficking
- Gross sexual imposition
- Having a weapon while under a disability
- Illegal administration or distribution of anabolic steroids
- Illegal manufacture of drugs or cultivation of marijuana
- Illegal use of a minor in nudity oriented material or performance
- Impositioning (now importuning)
- Improperly discharging a weapon at or near a school or dwelling
- Interference with custody
- Involuntary manslaughter
- Kidnapping
- Murder
- Pandering obscenity
- Pandering obscenity involving a minor
- Pandering sexually oriented matter involving a minor
- Patient abuse, neglect
- Placing harmful objects in food or confection
- Possession of drugs (that is not a minor drug possession offense)
- Procuring
- Promoting prostitution (children)
- Prostitution: after positive HIV test
- Public indecency
- Rape
- Robbery
- Sexual battery
- Sexual imposition
- Trafficking in drugs
- Unlawful abortion
- Voluntary manslaughter
- Voyeurism



200.10 (Cont'd)

■ POLICY

□ GUIDELINE

YOUTH PROTECTION

Child Protection Training for Clergy, Employees, Volunteers, and Clergy Applicants

Although it is preferable for new clergy, employees, volunteers, and clergy applicants to have attended a *Protecting God's Children* training session prior to working with children and youth, they have a grace period of up to six-weeks from their start date to attend a *Protecting God's Children* training session. If this grace period is needed, supervisors are to verify that the new employee or volunteer is pre-registered for a scheduled *Protecting God's Children* session by the first day of their work with children or youth. Special care must be taken to ensure that short-term volunteers receive this training in a timely manner that will properly prepare them for their service.

The *Protecting God's Children* program includes not only information on the scope of child sexual abuse, but also contains a plan for its prevention at parishes and schools. Individuals that have attended child sexual abuse awareness programs from other institutions are still required to attend a *Protecting God's Children* training session unless he or she can provide documentation that the previously attended program covered the same subject material and the Chancery Office grants approval.

Persons that have participated in a *Protecting God's Children* program in another diocese can request that their former diocese transfer their training record to the Diocese of Columbus.

If an employee or volunteer moves from a parish or school in the Diocese of Columbus to another parish or school in the Diocese of Columbus, the new parish or school should notify the diocese to request that the training record of the employee or volunteer be transferred.

Due to the sensitive nature of the *Protecting God's Children* program, some victims of child sexual abuse may not feel comfortable attending a *Protecting God's Children* training session. Anyone in this particular situation may request to receive the materials needed for child protection training in an alternate way. These requests are made through the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry. All requests for alternate child protection training for victims of child sexual abuse are kept confidential.



200.10 (Cont'd)

■ POLICY

□ GUIDELINE

YOUTH PROTECTION

Child Protection Continuing Education for Clergy and Other Personnel

In addition to attending a *Protecting God's Children* training session, some clergy, employees, and volunteers are also required to receive continuing education for child sexual abuse prevention. This continuing education is provided in monthly training bulletins generated by Virtus. Persons in the following positions, whether paid or volunteer, are required to participate in this continuing education process: priests, deacons, seminarians, diaconate students, principals, assistant principals, directors or coordinators of religious education, and directors/coordinators of youth ministry. These individuals are encouraged to disseminate this information among their staff and volunteers.

Other individuals interested in participating in the continuing education process should contact the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry.

Authority to Interpret This Policy

Interpreting of this policy in unique circumstances or its application in unclear situations shall be made by or at least receive the prior approval of the Vicar General or his delegate.



200.20

■ POLICY

□ GUIDELINE

YOUTH PROTECTION

REPORTING ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Child abuse is any non-accidental action that harms a child – whether physical, emotional, sexual or by neglect. That includes, but is not limited to:

- Engaging in sexual activity with a child;
- Denial of proper or necessary subsistence, education, medical care, or other care necessary for the child's health;
- Use of restraint procedures on a child that cause injury or pain;
- Administration of prescription drugs or medication without the ongoing supervision of a licensed physician;
- Providing alcoholic beverages or controlled substances;
- Commission of any act, other than by accident that threatens or results in any injury or in death to the child.

Every member of the youth ministry team and parish staff shall immediately report any suspected case of child abuse and/or neglect. In the State of Ohio, reports of child abuse/neglect are made to the county agencies of the Department of Job and Family Services / Public Children Services.

The following are the contact numbers for reporting child abuse in the 23 counties of the Diocese of Columbus:

Coshocton County: (740) 622-1020
Delaware County: (740) 833-2300
Fairfield County: (740) 653-4060
Fayette County: (740) 335-0350
Franklin County: (614) 229-7000
Hardin County: (419) 675-1130
Hocking County: (740) 385-4168
Holmes County: (330) 674-1111
Jackson County: (740) 286-4181
Knox County: (740) 392-5437
Licking County: (740) 349-6333
Madison County: (740) 852-4770

Marion County: (740) 389-2317
Morrow County: (419) 947-9111
Muskingum County: (740) 455-6710
Perry County: (740) 342-3836
Pickaway County: (740) 474-3105
Pike County: (740) 947-5080
Ross County: (740) 702-4453
Scioto County: (740) 456-4164
Tuscarawas County: (330) 339-7791
Union County: (937) 644-1010
Vinton County: (740) 596-2571



200.20 (Cont'd)

■ POLICY

□ GUIDELINE

YOUTH PROTECTION

If a county agency is unavailable for any reason, the county sheriff's office is always available for assistance. In the case of an emergency, please call 911.

In addition to contacting the appropriate county agency, any allegation of sexual abuse of a minor by a priest, deacon or other Church personnel shall also be immediately reported to the Diocesan Victims' Assistance Coordinator, the Rev. Msgr. Stephan J. Moloney, toll-free at 1-866-448-0217 or helpisavailable@colsdio.org.

It is the goal of the Diocese of Columbus to make the Church a place of safety: A place of prayer, ministry, and comfort. Everyone who enters our churches, schools, or facilities must be confident in this. Not one child or young person should suffer from abuse while at Church. In order to assure the safety of our children and young people, the Diocese of Columbus has enacted a complete program of protection. As part of this program, the Diocese of Columbus will provide appropriate, just, and pastoral care for anyone who has suffered the crime of sexual abuse of a minor at the hands of diocesan clergy or church employees or volunteers. The Diocese of Columbus will report any and all allegations of abuse reported to it to the authorities and will cooperate fully with those authorities.

Each parish must have a copy of the diocesan policy and procedures for addressing allegations of sexual abuse of minors by priests or deacons and have it readily available for parishioners and staff.



200.21

POLICY

GUIDELINE

YOUTH PROTECTION

DIOCESE OF COLUMBUS COMPLAINT FORM FOR ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL ABUSE OF A MINOR

This form may be used to present allegations that a Priest, Deacon or Church employee, agent or volunteer has committed an act of sexual abuse of a minor. The completed form is confidential and is to be submitted: Vicar General, Diocese of Columbus, 198 East Broad Street, Columbus, Ohio, 43215, in a sealed envelope clearly marked CONFIDENTIAL.

I. INFORMATION AS TO MINOR

Full Name: _____

Address: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Name and Address of Parent(s) or Guardian: _____

Telephone No: _____

Parish: _____

Name of school attending: _____

II. INFORMATION AS TO THE ACCUSED

Name: _____

Position: _____ Clergy _____ Deacon _____ Employee _____ Volunteer

Name and Address of place of employment: _____

Has accused been confronted or informed of allegation? _____ Yes _____ No

If yes, when and by whom: _____



200.21 (Cont'd)

POLICY

GUIDELINE

YOUTH PROTECTION

III. INFORMATION AS TO ALLEGATIONS

Brief description of alleged abuse (time, place and acts): _____

Have the allegations been reported to any civil authorities or Church personnel? __ Yes __ No

If yes, when, how and to whom: _____

Date of Report

Signature of Person Reporting

Print Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____



200.30

■ POLICY

□ GUIDELINE

YOUTH PROTECTION

ADULT CHAPERONES FOR YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Parishes must follow a strategy of “two-deep” ministry with adolescents, where at least two adults are present at all youth ministry activities and situations, wherever possible.

Where a one-to-one activity is required (e.g. counseling), such activities should take place in an open environment. Special attention should be given to provide a safe and confidential forum while following standards of prudence.

Adult chaperones for youth activities must be at least 21 years of age.

For youth ministry activities away from parish property, a ratio of one adult per ten youths must be followed. For overnight activities, a ratio of one adult per six youths must be followed. The ratio of male-to-female chaperones should closely parallel the ratio of male-to-female youths at an activity. This is particularly important for overnight activities.

For overnight activities where private rooms are used, an adult chaperone must never share a room with a youth. (Except where a parent is serving as a chaperone and there are no other persons sharing the room.)

No adult chaperone should ever enter a youth’s room unless it is absolutely necessary. If circumstances require it, the chaperone must be accompanied by another adult and the door must remain open the entire time the adults are present. Both adult chaperones should be of the same sex as the youth(s) in the room. If this is not possible, one male and one female chaperone may be used.

A youth must never be invited or instructed to enter the room of an adult chaperone.



■ POLICY

□ GUIDELINE

YOUTH PROTECTION

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR COORDINATORS OF YOUTH MINISTRY

1. Ecclesial & Theological

- a) Coordinators of youth ministry work collaboratively with the pastor (and/or other supervisors) and associates in ministry.
- b) Coordinators of youth ministry faithfully represent and practice the teachings of the Catholic Church with integrity in word and action.
- c) Coordinators of youth ministry are competent and receive education and training commensurate with their role(s) and responsibilities (§ 231, Code of Canon Law).
- d) Coordinators of youth ministry respect the diversity of spiritualities in the faith community and will not make their own personal form of spirituality normative.

2. Inclusion

- a) Coordinators of youth ministry recognize the dignity of each person and refrain from behaviors or words that are disrespectful of anyone or any group.
- b) Coordinators of youth ministry serve all people without regard to gender, national origin, age, marital status, socioeconomic status, or political beliefs.
- c) Coordinators of youth ministry act to ensure all persons have access to the resources, services and opportunities they require with particular regard for persons with special needs or disabilities.

3. Accountability

- a) Coordinators of youth ministry are accountable to the pastor or other duly appointed representative, under the authority of the diocesan bishop.
- b) Coordinators of youth ministry are called to serve the faith community, carrying out their ministry "...conscientiously, zealously, and diligently" (§ 231, Code of Canon Law.)
- c) Coordinators of youth ministry exercise responsible stewardship of resources while holding themselves to the highest standards of integrity regarding fiscal matters placed in their trust.



200.40 (cont'd)

■ POLICY

□ GUIDELINE

YOUTH PROTECTION

4. Confidentiality

- a) Coordinators of youth ministry respect confidentiality, yet are not held to confidentiality in the same way as ordained ministers and licensed, certified counselors.
- b) Coordinators of youth ministry adhere to civil and ecclesial law concerning the reporting of neglect, abuse or when physical harm could come to the person or to a third party.
- c) Coordinators of youth ministry support the rights and roles of parents while ministering to the needs and concerns of adolescents.

5. Conduct

- a) Coordinators of youth ministry are aware they have considerable personal power because of their ministerial position. Therefore, they will sustain respectful ministerial relationships, avoiding manipulation and other abuses of power.
- b) Physical, sexual, or romantic relationships between a coordinator of youth ministry and an adolescent are unethical and are prohibited.
- c) Coordinators of youth ministry model healthy and positive behaviors with adolescents.
- d) Procuring, providing, or using alcohol and/or controlled substances for or with adolescents is unethical and is prohibited.

6. Referrals and Intervention

- a) Coordinators of youth ministry are aware of the signs of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse and neglect.
- b) Coordinators of youth ministry are aware of their limitations with respect to paraprofessional counseling and make appropriate referrals.
- c) Coordinators of youth ministry adhere to civil and ecclesial law, policy and procedure for reporting abuse, suspected abuse or neglect.



200.40 (cont'd)

POLICY

GUIDELINE

YOUTH PROTECTION

7. Parish/Diocesan Policies

a) Coordinators of youth ministry are aware of and comply with all applicable parish, organizational and/or diocesan policies with special attention to sexual misconduct, safety, transportation, parental permission, and medical emergency policies.

I have read and understand the above code of ethics and commit to uphold this code in my ministry.

Signature: _____ Date: _____



200.41

■ POLICY

□ GUIDELINE

YOUTH PROTECTION

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR YOUTH MINISTRY TEAM MEMBERS

- Youth ministry team members work collaboratively with the pastor, coordinator of youth ministry (and/or other supervisors) and associates in ministry.
- Youth ministry team members faithfully represent and practice the teachings of the Catholic Church with integrity in word and action.
- Youth ministry team members are competent and receive education and training commensurate with their role(s) and responsibilities (§ 231, Code of Canon Law.)
- Youth ministry team members respect the diversity of spiritualities in the faith community and will not make their own personal form of spirituality normative.
- Youth ministry team members recognize the dignity of each person and refrain from behaviors or words that are disrespectful of anyone or any group.
- Youth ministry team members serve all people without regard to gender, national origin, age, marital status, socioeconomic status, or political beliefs.
- Youth ministry team members act to ensure all persons have access to the resources, services and opportunities they require with particular regard for persons with special needs or disabilities.
- Youth ministry team members are accountable to the pastor, coordinator of youth ministry, or other duly appointed representative, under the authority of the diocesan bishop.
- Youth ministry team members are called to serve the faith community, carrying out their ministry "...conscientiously, zealously, and diligently" (§ 231, Code of Canon Law.)
- Youth ministry team members exercise responsible stewardship of resources while holding themselves to the highest standards of integrity regarding fiscal matters placed in their trust.
- Youth ministry team members respect confidentiality, yet are not held to confidentiality in the same way as ordained ministers and licensed, certified counselors.



200.41 (Cont'd)

■ POLICY

□ GUIDELINE

YOUTH PROTECTION

- Youth ministry team members adhere to civil and ecclesial law concerning the reporting of neglect, abuse or when physical harm could come to the person or to a third party.
- Youth ministry team members support the rights and roles of parents while ministering to the needs and concerns of adolescents.
- Youth ministry team members are aware they have considerable personal power because of their ministerial position. Therefore, they will sustain respectful ministerial relationships, avoiding manipulation and other abuses of power.
- Physical, sexual, or romantic relationships between a youth ministry team member and an adolescent are unethical and are prohibited.
- Youth ministry team members model healthy and positive behaviors with adolescents.
- Procuring, providing, or using alcohol and/or controlled substances for or with adolescents is unethical and is prohibited.
- Youth ministry team members are aware of the signs of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse and neglect.
- Youth ministry team members are aware of their limitations with respect to paraprofessional counseling and make appropriate referrals.
- Youth ministry team members adhere to civil and ecclesial law, policy and procedure for reporting abuse, suspected abuse or neglect.
- Youth ministry team members are aware of and comply with all applicable parish, organizational and/or diocesan policies with special attention to sexual misconduct, safety, transportation, parental permission, and medical emergency policies.

I have read and understand the above code of ethics and commit to uphold this code in my ministry.

Signature: _____ Date: _____



200.42

□ POLICY

■ GUIDELINE

YOUTH PROTECTION

YOUTH BEHAVIOR AND CODE OF CONDUCT

Each youth ministry program should develop, publish, and update on a regular basis a code of conduct for participants. The code shall specify expectations for youth behavior. It should also indicate procedures, corrective measures, and penalties that the program may use for violations of these expectations. The code must safeguard the youth's right to due process.

Behavior is the manner in which one acts. Since the essence of Christian discipline is self discipline, youth must be free to choose one form of behavior over another. In choosing to behave or misbehave a youth takes upon him/herself the consequences of that chosen behavior.

1. In establishing a code of conduct the program shall:
 - a) ensure that the rules and consequences are understood by the youth
 - b) ensure that the punishments are pastorally constructive and relative to the misbehavior
 - c) encourage reconciliation with the offended party if applicable
2. Youth ministry team members shall uphold the code of conduct established for the program and follow the expectations, procedures, corrective measures and penalties regarding the program's rules.
3. Youth ministry team members shall be responsible for establishing an environment in which youth receive continuing instruction regarding acceptable behavior.
4. Since the Church supports the dignity of persons of all ages, corporal punishment in any form is never an acceptable form of punishment.
5. A person may use a physical response to "obtain possession of weapons or dangerous objects upon the person or within the control of the pupil, for the purpose of self-defense, or for the protection of persons or property." (Ohio Law 3319.41)

The code of conduct should be made available to youth participants, parent (s), or guardian (s) and the youth ministry team.



200.43

■ POLICY

□ GUIDELINE

YOUTH PROTECTION

DISSEMINATION OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

Each youth ministry program shall make the parish community aware of the code of conduct for employees and volunteers and make this code of conduct readily available to any interested parishioner.



200.50

□ POLICY

■ GUIDELINE

YOUTH PROTECTION

BEST PRACTICES FOR SCREENING ADULT VOLUNTEERS

In addition to the policies outlined in policy #200.10, the following steps can help create and maintain a safe environment for both children and adults.

1. Develop Policies and Procedures

Comprehensive policies help ensure that potential volunteers are treated fairly and that procedures are used consistently. Policies also help to provide continuity to a program.

Parish policies might include information about how volunteers will be screened – whether by application, interview, or a combination – what kind and the minimum number of references that will be required. Additionally, evaluation, dismissal, separation, and grievance processes could be outlined.

2. Create Volunteer Position Descriptions

Detailed position descriptions allow potential volunteers to determine whether an opportunity fits their interests, skills, and schedule. Additionally, volunteer administrators may use the position description to screen candidates based upon the basic qualifications needed for placement, including a clean police record.

3. Ask Volunteers to Complete an Application

A thorough written application can be a valuable screening tool. An application can help determine a volunteer's attitudes toward children, child abuse, and volunteering in general. An application may ask for personal information including name, address, phone, e-mail, social security number; emergency contact information; recent employment/volunteer information; areas of interest and availability; driver's license/insurance information when appropriate; medical conditions or special needs; references; inquiries to past felonies and/or misdemeanors. Ask potential volunteers for their signature to affirm that they have given truthful information.



200.50 (Cont')

□ POLICY

■ GUIDELINE

YOUTH PROTECTION

4. Conduct Interviews

Conducting interviews can be especially helpful when placing individuals interested in volunteer positions. Effective interviewing techniques include open-ended questions, good listening skills, and a clear understanding of the questions interviewers are permitted to ask under existing federal and state regulations.

5. Ask for References and/or Endorsements

References help organizations confirm personal and professional information provided by the potential volunteer and offer an objective opinion of that person's qualifications. For activities that call for regular unsupervised access, organizations might require volunteers to give at least two non-related references. For decentralized activities, seeking endorsement/approval from a person who is well acquainted with the volunteer will provide additional information. It's important to document all contacts.



200.51

□ POLICY

■ GUIDELINE

YOUTH PROTECTION

BEST PRACTICES FOR SCREENING AND MONITORING ADOLESCENT VOLUNTEERS

Introduction

In many parishes, adolescents provide a substantial amount of service in programs for younger children. Service projects that provide babysitting for parents during the holidays or assistance with religious education classes or nurseries during Mass are just a few of the ways that adolescents serve parishes and learn about the responsibility of parish life. Often these projects are part of preparation for Confirmation.

However, it is important not to assume automatically that adolescents are “safe” just because of their participation in ministry. Research tells us that adolescents are a high risk group for sexual abuse of children. In fact, studies in the United States indicate that juveniles are responsible for 40 percent of the sexual assaults on children under the age of 6 and 39 percent of the attacks on children ages 11-16.[i] One study in the U.S. shows that 13 to 14 year olds are responsible for more than three times the number of sexual molestation cases of children under the age 12 than any other age group over 16.[ii]

Over the past several years, through *Protecting God's Children for Adults* sessions and our diocesan policies and audits, we have raised awareness about the need to screen adults before allowing them access to our children—and the need to screen and monitor those with access to children is not just confined to adults. We must pay attention to the adolescents who are caring for and ministering to our young children.

Screening

Many parishes are looking for guidance in their efforts to conduct thorough screening and meet the needs of ministry to all the children in the community. There is no easy way to screen adolescents. In fact, some traditional screening tools will not help when the applicant is an adolescent. We cannot conduct civilian criminal background checks on juveniles, for example.



200.51 (Cont')

□ POLICY

■ GUIDELINE

YOUTH PROTECTION

Even those with convictions are protected from discovery through background checks and the record is wiped clean when the young person turns 18.

This means that it is essential that policies be established and enforced that govern the interactions between adolescents and the young people they serve. Traditional screening tools including applications, references (perhaps including letters of references from non-related adults who are familiar with the young person's character), and personal interviews are crucial parts to any effective screening process.

Parish policies and procedures must also take into account the limited ability to screen adolescent applicants. For example, require that a policy-compliant adult supervise all interactions, programs, and events involving adolescents and younger children. In addition, maintain a policy similar to the Boy Scouts' "two-deep leadership." Within a parish, this means that there be no less than two responsible adult leaders present with young people, and both of them must be compliant with all diocesan policies.

Establishing policies and going through the traditional application and interview processes can help parishes to establish a responsible process for screening adolescents who are involved in children's ministries.

Training

Because of the sensitive nature of the material, adolescents are not permitted to attend Protecting God's Children for Adults sessions. Parish leaders should work with adolescent volunteers to make them aware of parish and diocesan policies.

The *Protecting God's Children Quick Reference Guide* brochure should be shared with adolescent volunteers to make them aware of our plan to protect children and youth. When sharing information about child sexual abuse with adolescent volunteers, particular attention to the following will also be beneficial:

- The harm sexual abuse causes.
- The danger of dwelling on unhealthy fantasies.
- The importance of reporting suspected abuse, including abuse committed by a peer.



200.51 (Cont')

□ POLICY

■ GUIDELINE

YOUTH PROTECTION

Warning Signs

Some of the behavioral warning signs of risky adolescents are the same as those of risky adults. Additionally, the following signs are unique to the adolescent offender.

Risky adolescents may:

- Explore his or her own natural sexual curiosity with younger children or those of differing size, status, ability, or power. This means an adolescent may be more overtly sexual with young children.
- Focus on being with younger children rather than with their own peers. This adolescent spends an unusual amount of time with younger children when he or she could be with peers.
- Share “secret” places or hideaways with younger children or create and play “special” games with them that involve too much touching and demands for silence.
- Insist on physical contact with a child, even when the child resists the attention.

[i] Oliver, B. (2007) Child Abuse & Neglect, “Three steps to reducing child molestation by adolescents”, Vol 31, 683.

[ii] Ibid.

Based on *Screening and Monitoring Adolescent Volunteers*, by: Sharon Doty, J.D., M.H.R. and published by The National Catholic Risk Retention Group, 2008.



200.60

□ POLICY

■ GUIDELINE

YOUTH PROTECTION

BEST PRACTICES FOR MONITORING YOUTH MINISTRY FACILITIES

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. The following steps can help create a safer environment for our children, youth, and adults.

- Identify secluded areas, lock empty rooms.
- Develop policies regarding use of secluded areas.
- Do not permit youth to enter staff-only areas.
- Only meet with youth where other adults can pass by.
- Supervisors should look in on activities.
- Make sure enough adult volunteers are present for all programs.
- Encourage parents to visit and participate in programs and activities.
- Do not start any new programs without approval from the pastor.



200.61

■ POLICY

□ GUIDELINE

YOUTH PROTECTION

YOUTH MINISTRY GATHERINGS AT PRIVATE RESIDENCES

Many well-intentioned employees and volunteers have a desire to open their homes to young people. Even with the best of intentions, this would put young people at risk by making it acceptable in the mind of a young person to enter the residence of an adult. This could later be exploited by another adult whose intentions are not altruistic.

It is the policy of the Catholic Diocese of Columbus that no parish or school sponsored youth ministry gatherings, events, or activities take place at private residences.

This policy is designed to protect both young people and adult youth ministry leaders. It ensures accessibility and transparency of our youth ministry programs and helps establish a safe environment for everyone involved.



200.70

■ POLICY

□ GUIDELINE

YOUTH PROTECTION

PARENTAL OBSERVATION AND OTHER VISITORS

Parents must be welcomed to observe all youth activities sponsored by the parish. While efforts should be made to create an environment where youth are comfortable expressing themselves, "...the right and duty of the parents to educate their children are primordial and inalienable." (CCC 2221) Parents should never be denied the right to observe programs in which their children participate.

In an effort to provide a safe environment for all students, each parish shall have a written policy detailing the procedures visitors must follow when visiting a program. This policy must minimally address the following elements:

1. sign-in procedures,
2. advance notice necessary to observe an activity,
3. procedure for accompanying the visitor to and from observation area.



200.80

■ POLICY

□ GUIDELINE

YOUTH PROTECTION

HEALTH AND SAFETY OF YOUTH

Each youth ministry program shall provide an organized program of health services designed to identify problems and coordinate health resources of the local community. Minimally the health services of the programs shall include:

- a) Procedures for dealing with immediate treatment of youth in cases of emergency.
these procedures shall include providing the parent (s) or guardian (s) of youth with a written form for authorizing emergency medical treatment.
- b) Procedures for emergency situations: fire drills, or rapid dismissals, and tornado drills.
- c) Records of fire drills and seasonal tornado drills.
- d) Emergency procedures posted in meeting rooms and available to parents, youth, and youth ministry team members.
- e) Emergency telephone numbers posted by office telephones.
- f) Supervision of parish grounds, recreational areas, and other facilities when scheduled for use by youth.
- g) First aid facilities and materials.
- h) Keeping a file of written incident reports.



200.81

POLICY

GUIDELINE

YOUTH PROTECTION

THREATS TO WELFARE AND SAFETY

No youth will use, possess, handle, transmit or conceal any object which is or can be considered a weapon or instrument of violence. Objects which are explosive or incendiary in nature, or any object reasonably determined to be a threat to the safety or security of any person, are prohibited on parish premises, and at youth ministry functions.



200.82

■ POLICY

□ GUIDELINE

YOUTH PROTECTION

BULLYING

The Diocese of Columbus youth ministry programs and their youth ministry teams shall not tolerate any bullying on parish grounds or at any program activity on or off site.

Bullying is a pattern of abuse over time and involves a student being “picked on”. Bullying includes physical intimidation or assault; extortion; oral or written threats; teasing; putdowns; name-calling; threatening looks, gestures, or actions; cruel rumors; false accusations; and social isolation.

The diocese expects youth ministry team members who observe or become aware of an act of bullying to take immediate, appropriate steps to intervene. If a team member believes that his/her intervention has not resolved the matter, or if the bullying persists, he/she shall report to the coordinator of youth ministry for further investigation.

The diocese expects youth and parents who become aware of an act of bullying on parish grounds or at any program activity on or off site to report it to the coordinator for further investigation. The coordinator will contact parents of the aggressor and the victim. This investigation may include interviews with youth, parents, team members, parish staff, and reviewing records.

Consequences for youth who bully others should include counseling, parent conference, and/or suspension from activities depending on the results of the investigation.