

Policies and Procedures for the Protection of Minors

October, 2016



Office of Child and Youth Protection
Diocese of Colorado Springs
www.diocs.org



Diocese of Colorado Springs

Office of the Bishop
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October 28, 2016

Dear Safe Environment Coordinator,

As Pope Francis recently affirmed, protecting our young people is integral to our identity as Church and must be at the very core of our ministry. It is Christ Himself who entrusts us with these precious little ones, and the success of our mission is dependent upon our keeping them safe to worship, learn, and participate in the life of the Church. It is up to all of us to remain vigilant and keep the safety of our children and young people among our highest priorities.

Thank you for all that you do to keep our children and young people safe from those who would do them harm. Your role as a Parish/School Safe Environment Coordinator is essential to that goal, and in making the Church a safe and loving place for everyone. This manual has been developed to guide and support you in your efforts.

Please know that I am deeply grateful for the fine work that you do.

Assuring you of my prayers and wishing you every blessing, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Michael J. Sheridan
Bishop of Colorado Springs

Foreword

The articles and norms instituted by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops regarding safe environment for minors, *Promise to Protect, Pledge to Heal*, outline procedures that are mandatory for all dioceses in order to make and maintain a safe environment for our children and young people.

This manual contains policies that govern interactions between minors and those who, on behalf of the parish/school or outside organization, have ongoing or high-risk contact with them. It also provides resources for Safe Environment Coordinators and others in order to comply with the standards contained in the Charter.

For the purposes of this manual, a Volunteer is defined as an unpaid person who has ongoing or high-risk contact with minors.


Certain actions, while not mandated, are noted as recommendations in order to achieve the safest environment possible. The pastor may decide that these recommendations are not feasible or advisable based on the capabilities of the particular parish or school.

The information contained in this manual may change over time. Please consult the diocesan intranet (the Heavenly Gate) or the diocesan Office of Child and Youth Protection for the most current information.

While this manual refers to parish/school volunteers and employees, these standards also apply to priests and deacons who serve in the diocese.

How to use this manual

This is an electronic, interactive document. Forms, handouts, websites and other documents are linked within the document.

- *Definitions* - further explanations for some words and phrases are provided, just place the cursor over these words (these are words and phrases included in the Glossary on pages 27 and 28), it will turn into a pointing hand -- and the definition or explanation will be revealed in a hovering box. *Do not click*. Test it *here*. **Purple** words have additional information revealed in the same way.
- *Forms and documents* - wherever there is the name of a document or form it will be underlined in **green**. Place the cursor on the name of the form or document, it will turn into the pointing hand. Click on the name of the form or document and it will open in a new window. Test it here: *Sexual Misconduct Policy*.
- *Website links* - will be underlined in **blue** or will be **blue letters**. When you place the cursor over the word, phrase, or URL, you will see the pointing hand over the link to click. Test it here: *Heavenly Gate link*.
- *Policies referenced within manual* - underlined in **red** - clicking on these links will bring you to that policy within this manual. If you want to return to where you were before the click, you will have to scroll back to that place in the document.

If you are having any difficulty, please contact the Office of Child and Youth Protection.

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GENERAL INFORMATION

SERIES 1000

Bishops' Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People

Policy 1010

The United States Council of Catholic Bishops authored a Charter entitled, *Promise to Protect, Pledge to Heal*. It can be found at <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/child-and-youth-protection/charter.cfm>

Sexual Misconduct Policy (Code of Conduct)

Policy 1020

Any sexual, physical, or emotional abuse, or neglect of minors is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. Adults who have ongoing or high-risk contact with minors on behalf of the parish/school or any outside organization must receive and agree to comply with the Sexual Misconduct Policy of the Diocese of Colorado Springs.

Forms/Resources:

Sexual Misconduct Policy of the Diocese of Colorado Springs

Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

Policy 1030

Every individual who has reasonable cause to know or suspect child abuse and/or neglect must immediately report the matter to law enforcement (or the Colorado Child Abuse Reporting Hotline at 1-844-CO-4-KIDS) in keeping with the Sexual Misconduct Policy of the Diocese of Colorado Springs. If a minor is in imminent danger, call 911 immediately.

A record of the report must be made on a Child Abuse Reporting Form; completed forms are to be held securely and confidentially by the pastor and copied to the diocesan Office of Child and Youth Protection.

In every case in which he is not a party to the abuse, the pastor must be notified of any report being made. In every instance where the allegation of abuse is made against a person who participates in any way at the parish/school, the diocesan Office of Child and Youth Protection and Diocesan Counsel must be notified immediately.

At the time of the allegation, the complainant or his/her family is to be advised that the parish/school will report to public authorities and he/she has the right to make a report.

Those who report child abuse or neglect must cooperate with any investigation. Those with knowledge of the situation shall not discuss the incident unless necessary for an investigation or the operation of the parish/school.

The diocesan Office of Child and Youth Protection may be contacted at 719-636-2345, or in emergency situations, at the Diocesan Reporting Hotline at 719-866-6505.

Forms/Resources:

Reporting Child Abuse Contact Information

Child Abuse Reporting Form

Sexual Misconduct Policy of the Diocese of Colorado Springs

Outreach to Victims

Policy 1040

Outreach in the form of pastoral support, and/or referral for psychological or other assistance is to be made to a person, or his/her family, alleging sexual abuse of a minor against anyone in Church service, whether the alleged abuse is recent or occurred in the distant past.

Outreach is typically offered by the diocesan Office of Child and Youth Protection, although a pastor may offer it as well.

Duties of a Parish/School Safe Environment Coordinator

Policy 1050

The purpose of the Safe Environment Coordinator is to support the mission and operations of the parish/school by ensuring compliance with the diocese's safe environment protocols and serving as a liaison to the diocesan Office of Child and Youth Protection. The diocesan Office of Child and Youth Protection provides general orientation to new coordinators upon request. The duties of the Coordinator include:

- Instruct and support others with safe environment compliance responsibilities and implementation procedures.
- Ensure that those who have ongoing or high-risk contact with minors are processed, screened, and safe-environment trained prior to allowing their contact with minors.
- Ensure that *Keeping Kids Safe*, or other approved child safety training program, is conducted for the children no fewer than two times each audit year, once in the fall and once in the spring.
- Regularly provide safe environment materials to employees, volunteers, parents, and parishioners.
- Ensure that safe environment activities and child abuse reporting protocols are regularly communicated to employees, volunteers, parents, and parishioners.
- Promote safe environment training opportunities to parents, parishioners, and the broader community.
- Retain required confidential documentation in a safe and secure location, capable of being locked and accessible by only those with a strict "need-to-know"

classification, determined by the pastor. Confidential information may not be shared unless necessary for the performance of assigned duties.

- Develop, implement, and manage security measures for areas used for programs and activities for minors.
- Attend and participate in diocesan Parish Safe Environment Coordinators' meetings.
- Periodically review the parish's/school's safe environment compliance efforts. Institute corrections or improvements as needed.
- Assist as needed in compliance audits and reviews conducted or contracted by the diocese and/or the National Secretariat for Child and Youth Protection. Ensure that all individuals with safe environment compliance responsibilities are present during compliance audits or reviews.

Succession Management

Policy 1060

Pastors should plan carefully for succession management, ensuring that new safe environment coordinators are trained in the responsibilities and procedures of the position.

SCREENING AND TRAINING FOR ADULTS

SERIES 2000

Every adult being considered for ongoing or high-risk contact with minors must complete the procedures below before working with minors.

Please note specific procedures regarding:

- Adults Age 18-20 (Policy 2090)
- Visiting and Non-Permanent Clergy (Policy 2100)
- Driving (Policy 4050)
- Related Groups and Individuals (Policy Series 6000)

Six Month Waiting Period

Policy 2010

It is recommended that potential volunteers be active and known members of the parish/school community for a minimum of six months before working with minors.

New Volunteer Packet

Policy 2020

Adults being considered for ongoing or high-risk contact with minors must read the items below to begin the intake process.

Forms/Resources:

Welcome Letter

Volunteer Application

Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) Authorization for Volunteers

Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) Disclosure for Volunteers

Sexual Misconduct Policy of the Diocese of Colorado Springs

A Summary of Your Rights Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act

Guidelines for Those Working With Children and Young People

Interactions and Behaviors Summary

Electronic Communication & Social Media Policy With Regard to Minors

Acknowledgment and Affirmation

Application

Policy 2030

Potential adult volunteers being considered for ongoing or high-risk contact with minors must complete a Volunteer Application. The application must be reviewed and approved by the pastor or his designee before continuing intake procedures. The application is to be retained in the volunteer's file. (*Employees* complete employment applications according to the location's personnel protocols.)

Forms/Resources:

Volunteer Application

Acknowledgment and Affirmation

Policy 2040

After an application has been approved, potential adult volunteers being considered for ongoing or high-risk contact with minors must sign an Acknowledgment and Affirmation attesting to their agreement of certain terms and conditions prior to having contact with minors. (*Employees execute an Employment Agreement.*)

Forms/Resources:
Acknowledgment and Affirmation

Criminal Background Investigation (CBI)

Policy 2050

All volunteers and employees with ongoing or high-risk contact with minors, ***including licensed teachers***, must pass a formal criminal background investigation (CBI). A preferred list of CBI providers that have been vetted for thoroughness is provided.

CBI reports may be shared between parishes/schools of the Diocese of Colorado Springs upon receiving a written request from the employee or volunteer. The report must be transmitted directly from the location that obtained the report to the new location.

CBI reports from entities outside the Diocese of Colorado Springs are not acceptable with the exception of outside speakers and visiting clergy who follow a separate protocol.

CBI's must be updated every five years.

Forms/Resources:
How to Conduct a Criminal Background Investigation
Preferred Criminal Background Investigation Providers
A Summary of Rights Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act
Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) Authorization for Volunteers
Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) Disclosure for Volunteers

Additional Screening Methods

Policy 2060

Checking references has been known to reveal relevant information not available through a CBI. Therefore, consider obtaining reference checks as well as interviewing applicants. Family members may not serve as references.

Forms/Resources:
Reference Check Form
Suggested Volunteer Interview Questions

Adults must attend the Foundational Safe Environment Training entitled, “A Child’s Safety is an Adult’s Job,” prior to being allowed ongoing or high-risk contact with minors. It is to be conducted in either live or DVD format. The DVD format must be facilitated by a screened and trained parish/school staff member. Live training is provided by the Office of Child and Youth Protection.

Documentation is to be filed at the parish/school and must include:

- sign-in sheets
- the location of the training
- the date of the training
- the instructor’s name

Sign-in sheets for foundational training are to be copied to the diocesan Office of Child and Youth Protection.

Foundational training must be repeated if there is an interruption in parish/school service of five or more years.

Training opportunities are to be offered to parents, parishioners, and the broader community. Sign-in sheets are recommended in these circumstances because attendees may decide at a later date to volunteer and it would be helpful to have a record of their training.

Handouts to be distributed during the foundational training include:

- Sexual Misconduct Policy of the Diocese of Colorado Springs
- Guidelines for Those Working with Children and Young People
- Interactions and Behaviors Summary
- Electronic Communication & Social Media Policy With Regard to Minors
- Guidelines for Supervising Those Working With Children and Young People
- Victims and Grooming Behaviors
- How to Recognize Abuse
- How to Receive an Allegation
- Reporting Child Abuse Contact Information
- Suicide Warning Signs
- Signs of Human Trafficking
- Prevention Strategies
- Additional Resources

Forms/Resources:

"A Child's Safety is an Adult's Job" Facilitator's Guide
Training Handout Packet
Scenario Exercise for Safe Environment Training

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Revised 1/4/2018

Update Training

Policy 2080

Adults (including clergy) who have ongoing or high-risk contact with minors must attend an Update Training program annually which is supplied by the diocese, and is to be facilitated by a parish/school staff member, clergy, or designee. The Sexual Misconduct Policy and the Reporting Abuse and Neglect of a Minor Policy are to be reviewed during each year's Update Training.

Documentation for Update Training is to be kept at the parish/school and must include

- an Update Training sign-in sheet
- the date of the class
- the location of the class
- the instructor's name

Sign-in sheets that include a priest, deacon, seminarian, or diaconate candidate must be copied to the Bishop's office.

Forms/Resources:

Update Training Sign-In Sheet

Sexual Misconduct Policy of the Diocese of Colorado Springs

Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect Policy #1030

Adults Age 18-20

Policy 2090

A person between the ages of 18-20 may have ongoing contact and serve as a second adult with minors up to and including the eighth grade under direct supervision by an unrelated, screened and trained adult age 21 or over, as well as have:

- completed high school
- been active and known in the parish/school for a minimum of six months
- completed a Volunteer Application
- attended foundational safe environment training
- reviewed the Interactions and Behaviors Summary with a staff member
- had a successful criminal background investigation completed (Refer to Criminal Background Investigation, Policy #2050)

Checking references has been known to reveal relevant information not available through a CBI. Especially since criminal background checks typically do not have access to juvenile records, it is strongly recommended that reference checks be obtained for this age group.

Chaperones must be 21 years of age or over; the recommended minimum age for driving individuals is 25.

Forms/Resources:

Volunteer Application

Interactions and Behaviors Summary
How to Conduct a Criminal Background Investigation
Preferred Criminal Background Investigation Providers
Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) Authorization for Volunteers
Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) Disclosure for Volunteers
Reference Check Form

Visiting and Non-Permanent Clergy

Policy 2100

Pastors are responsible for obtaining Letters of Suitability from applicable superiors attesting that all visiting and non-permanent clergy have met certain conditions prior to allowing them to provide sacramental services in the diocese. Check with the Bishop's Office to see if one is already on file. Otherwise, letters obtained directly from the clergy's superior are to be copied to the Bishop's Office. (Clergy who are visiting for reasons other than sacramental service such as teaching or making a presentation, etc. must provide a completed Testimonial of Suitability for Clergy.)

Suitability letters may not be more than one year old and are to be retained at the parish.

Letters of Suitability for ministry must attest that:

- he is of good moral character and reputation
- there is nothing which would in any way limit or disqualify him from this ministry
- there is nothing in his background which would render him unsuitable to work with minors
- his safe environment training and criminal background check are current.

Forms/Resources:

Sample Letter of Suitability
Testimonial of Suitability for Clergy

SCREENING AND TRAINING FOR MINORS

SERIES 3000

Note: *As many as 40% of children who are sexually abused are abused by older, or more powerful children. The number of youth coming to the attention of police for sex offenses increases sharply at age 12 and plateaus after age 14. Early adolescence is the peak age for youth offenses against younger children.* (Crimes Against Children Research Center, 2012) Consequently, training and supervision of minors, and in some cases screening, are extremely critical to our efforts to keep children safe.

Safe Environment Training

Policy 3010

All minors who are involved in parish/school activities must receive safe environment training from the list of Approved Safe Environment Training Programs for Minors. Safe environment training is to be conducted no fewer than two times each audit year, once in the fall and once in the spring. (A minor who has received training only once during the year may be considered trained for audit purposes only.) The preferred program is *Keeping Kids Safe*. Optional lesson plans for this program are available below.

A list of approved supplemental training programs is provided for additional resources but are not required and do not replace the required training from the Approved Training Programs for Minors. All training programs must be pre-approved by the Bishop of Colorado Springs through the Office of Child and Youth Protection.

If a student is absent for safe environment training, reasonable attempts to make-up the session or provide parents with the session's materials should be made.

Documentation is to be kept at the parish/school and must include:

- a class roster
- the date of the class
- the instructor's name
- the program content
- evidence of attempts to provide make-up sessions (if applicable)
- evidence of providing parents with safe environment training materials (if applicable)

Forms/Resources:

Approved Training Programs for Minors

Keeping Kids Safe

Keeping Kids Safe Lesson Plans

Preschool Autumn

Preschool Spring

Grades 1-2 Autumn

Grades 1-2 Spring

Grades 3-5 Autumn

Grades 3-5 Spring

Grades 6-8 Autumn

Grades 6-8 Spring

Grades 9-12 Autumn

Grades 9-12 Spring

Bullying Grades 1-5

Bullying Grades 6-12

Supplemental Training Programs for Minors

Policy and Procedures for the Protection of Minors

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Parental Opt-Out

Policy 3020

Parents may excuse their child from safe environment training. In such circumstances, a Parental Opt-Out Form must be completed and filed. Instructors must ensure that the minor is not present for the safe environment training portion of the activity.

Forms/Resources:

Parental Opt-Out Form

Minor Volunteers and Helpers

Policy 3030

Minors who assist at activities involving other minors must never be unsupervised and must be safe environment trained per policy 3010. Minor volunteers/helpers may never supervise other minors, be left alone with other minors, nor assist them with restroom, diaper changing, or other intimate activities.

At the pastor's discretion:

- The minors' supervisor will review the Interactions and Behaviors Summary with them.
- Parents or guardians may be asked to complete a Minor Volunteer Parental Consent Form. (In the absence of this form, emergency contact information should be obtained.)

Forms/Resources:

Approved Training Programs for Minors

Interactions and Behaviors Summary

Minor Volunteer Parental Consent Form

Altar Servers

Policy 3040

Minor altar servers must comply with the policy for Minor Volunteer and Helpers (Policy 3030). Minor altar servers who have been *formally designated* to direct the activities of other altar servers must comply with the policy for Peer Leaders (Policy 3050).

Peer Leaders

Policy 3050

Minors who are *formally designated* to function as leaders during activities of other minors, known as Peer Leaders, must be screened for suitability to that role. Peer Leaders must:

- provide a completed Peer Leader Information Form.
- provide a signed Minor Volunteer Parental Consent Form.
- be safe environment trained per policy 3010.
- review the Interactions and Behaviors Summary with a supervisor.
- receive positive results from no fewer than two reference checks. Family members may not provide references.

Peer leaders must be supervised by screened and trained adults at all times and may not assist other minors with restroom, diaper changing, or other intimate activities.

Forms/Resources:

Approved Training Programs for Minors

Peer Leader Information Form

Minor Volunteer Parental Consent Form

Interactions and Behaviors Summary

Reference Check Form

SUPERVISION

SERIES 4000

Supervision of Adults

Policy 4010

Adults who have ongoing or high-risk contact with minors must know to whom they report. Supervisors should make random and unannounced visits each time an activity is in session. Supervisors must be available to participants throughout the activity.

Forms/Resources:

Guidelines for Supervising Those Working with Children and Young People

Note: As many as 40% of children who are sexually abused are abused by older, or more powerful children. The number of youth coming to the attention of police for sex offenses increases sharply at age 12 and plateaus after age 14. Early adolescence is the peak age for youth offenses against younger children. (Crimes Against Children Research Center, 2012) Consequently, training and supervision of minors, and in some cases screening, are extremely critical to our efforts to keep children safe.

Supervision of Minors (Two Adult Rule)

Policy 4020

Minors must be supervised by at least two adults whenever possible. A married couple or two members of the same family constitute a single individual. Supervisors must provide oversight throughout the activity. See also “Adults Age 18-20” (Policy 2090).

Overnight Activities

Policy 4030

Overnight events such as camping and youth retreats are high-risk activities. In these situations, there must be a minimum of two chaperones, they must be 21 years of age or older, and ideally would include both genders, with sleeping areas separated by gender.

Proper supervision must be provided at all times. What is considered “proper” could vary according to the age of participants and the type of activity. The greater ratio of supervision, the better. See also “Adults Age 18-20” (Policy 2090) and any Catholic Mutual Group guidelines related to overnight events.

Chaperones

Policy 4040

Chaperones must be 21 years of age or over, and ideally include both genders. Minimally, the initial ten or fewer participants need to be chaperoned by no fewer than two adults. For each additional one to six minors, an additional adult needs to be added.

Proper supervision must be provided at all times. What is considered “proper” could vary according to the age of participants and the type of activity. The greater ratio of supervision, the better. See also “Adults Age 18-20” (Policy 2090) and any **Catholic Mutual Group guidelines** related to overnight events.

Driving

Policy 4050

The recommended minimum age for drivers who transport other individuals is 25. An adult may not be alone in a vehicle with an unrelated minor. A best practice, when multiple vehicles are involved, is for drivers to travel in caravans, maintain contact with the other drivers, and never be separated from the other vehicles. Also refer to **Catholic Mutual Group guidelines** related to driving.

Ongoing Activities Held Off-Site

Policy 4060

Utilizing off-site locations is a high-risk activity. If an ongoing activity such as youth group or religious education classes are held at locations other than the parish/school, a careful assessment of the location is necessary. A partial list of considerations is below. For instance, how will the parish/school ensure that:

- there will be no non-screened and non-trained adults present?
- there will be no non-trained minors present?
- minors will not have access to areas that are not being used for the activity?
- minors will not have access to alcohol, and/or other controlled substances?
- minors will not have access to weapons?
- the property is suitable for minors?
- there would be no occasions when an adult would be alone with a minor out of view of a supervisor?
- adequate security measures will be in place for dismissal after the event is over?

Parents Present During Activities

Policy 4070

Parents may attend an ongoing event when their child is present for up to three non-consecutive times per year without a CBI or safe environment training. In these situations, the parents may never be alone with an unrelated minor. A parent dropping off and picking up a child, even when sign-in/sign-out procedures are in place, does not constitute attending the event.

COMMUNICATION

SERIES 5000

General Communication

Policy 5010

Parishes/schools must make the following information available to parishioners and others in printed form:

- Sexual Misconduct Policy of the Diocese of Colorado Springs
- *Keeping Kids Safe* brochures
- How to Report Abuse or Neglect of a Minor
- **Diocesan-provided posters**

Optional materials to post and/or distribute include:

- **April Child Abuse Prevention Month bulletin inserts**
- Interactions and Behaviors Summary
- **Schedule of safe environment training opportunities (if available)**
- **Other child safety information**

All printed materials must be distributed and/or clearly posted in high-traffic areas with access by all parishioners.

Forms/Resources:

Sexual Misconduct Policy of the Diocese of Colorado Springs

Keeping Kids Safe

How to Report Abuse or Neglect of a Minor (Poster)

Diocesan-approved posters

Interactions and Behaviors Summary

Pulpit Announcements

Policy 5020

The prohibition on sexual misconduct, procedures for how to report abuse and neglect of a minor, and other safe environment information are to be the subject of pulpit announcements at least once per year. Evidence of the pulpit announcement should be maintained and should include the content and the date when it was made.

Forms/Resources:

Sample Pulpit Announcement

Publicity

Policy 5030

Methods of providing safe environment information may include, but are not limited to:

- Bulletin inserts and blurbs
- Kiosks
- Websites
- Electronic and/or regular mail
- Social media
- Welcome packets

- Pocket racks
- Parish/school directory
- Display tables
- Newsletters
- Secular publications
- Community events or publications

Electronic Communication

Policy 5040

Parishes and schools must comply with the Electronic Communication & Social Media Policy with Regard to Minors Within the Diocese of Colorado Springs.

*Forms/Resources:
Electronic Communication & Social Media Policy With Regard to Minors*

Use of a Minor’s Name or Image

Policy 5050

Written consent utilizing a Consent for Release form must be obtained before using a minor’s name and/or audio/video depiction. The use of any name or likeness is limited to the announcement, acknowledgment or achievement or participation, and information about the promotion of an applicable ministry or event.

*Forms/Resources:
Consent for Release*

Heavenly Gate

Policy 5060

The Diocese of Colorado Springs maintains an intranet, known as the Heavenly Gate Information Dashboard that is updated regularly, and contains the manual, forms, documents, and resources. To obtain a password for access to the Heavenly Gate, follow the link, “Request an Account” on the home page at <http://info.diocs.org>.

Media Relations

Policy 5070

No statements may be made to the media unless the spokesperson is specifically authorized by the Bishop or his designee.

RELATED GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS

SERIES 6000

Scouts

Policy 6010

All scouting and similar groups, whether officially sponsored/chartered by a parish or simply using space within the parish must comply with all safe environment standards contained in this manual, including but not limited to, completing criminal background checks on all adults and ensuring that both adults and children have received diocesan-approved safe environment training.

Knights of Columbus

Policy 6020

Knights with ongoing or high-risk contact with minors must complete a criminal background check and receive diocesan-approved safe environment training.

The Knights of Columbus have an exclusive hotline to report child safety concerns (1-844-563-2723) but if the report involves a parish or a Catholic school, the knight must also immediately report the matter in keeping with Policy 1030: Reporting Abuse and Neglect of a Minor.

Ushers, Greeters, and Hospitality Ministers

Policy 6030

It is recommended that ushers, greeters, and hospitality ministers, etc., receive safe environment training.

Choirs

Policy 6040

Adult choir members should receive safe environment training and CBI clearance if the choir is comprised of adults and minors.

Home and Medical Facility Visitation

Policy 6050

Home and medical facility visitations can be high-risk activities if minors are present. It is recommended that individuals who make such visits receive safe environment training and CBI screening. These would include, but are not limited to Stephen Ministers, Befrienders, and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.

Outside Speakers

Policy 6060

All outside speakers, including clergy, must comply with the protocols contained in the document, "Ministry Clearance Requirements for Visiting Ministry Providers Coming into the Diocese of Colorado Springs," which is available from the Bishop's Office.

Outside Service Providers**Policy 6070**

Outside companies conducting on-site business at parishes/schools must be supervised at all times when minors are present.

Outside Groups**Policy 6080**

Outside groups that utilize space at a parish/school must sign a “Shared Space Agreement” (obtained from the diocesan Office of Risk Management), receive a copy of the diocese’s current Sexual Misconduct Policy, and sign an Acknowledgment and Affirmation that they will comply with the policy.

Forms/Resources:

Sexual Misconduct Policy of the Diocese of Colorado Springs

Acknowledgment and Affirmation

Returning Sex Offenders**Policy 6090**

Convicted sex offenders attending or wishing to return to a parish must execute a formal covenant with the pastor clarifying the parameters of their participation and ensuring that attendance does not violate the offender’s terms of probation. This document should be reviewed and executed annually.

Forms/Resources:

Returning Offenders Covenant Sample

DOCUMENTATION AND RECORDKEEPING

SERIES 7000

Files

Policy 7010

Files are to be maintained for each adult and peer leader who has ongoing or high-risk contact with minors. (Employee files are maintained according to the location's personnel protocols.)

Files for **adults** should contain:

- Volunteer Application
- FCRA Authorization Form
- FCRA Disclosure Form
- CBI reports
- Signed Acknowledgment and Affirmation
- Evidence of safe environment training. (Foundational training sign-in sheets are also to be copied to the Office of Child and Youth Protection. Update Training sign-in sheets are not copied to the Office of Child and Youth Protection.)
- Reference records (if applicable)
- Interview records (if applicable)

Files for the training of **minors** should contain:

- list of attendees
- the date of the class
- the instructor's name
- the program content
- any opt-out parental forms and documentation that training materials were provided to the parent
- evidence of make-up session, if applicable

Files for **peer leaders** should contain:

- a Peer Leader Information Form
- a signed Minor Volunteer Parental Consent Form
- evidence of diocesan-approved safe environment training
- evidence of review of Interactions and Behaviors Summary
- results of no fewer than two positive reference checks

Files must be kept in a locked, secure location.

Files on active individuals are to be kept separate from inactive individuals' files.

Forms/Resources:

Volunteer File Inventory

Volunteer Application
Peer Leader Information Form
Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) Authorization for Volunteers
Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) Disclosure for Volunteers
Acknowledgment and Affirmation
Reference Check Form
Suggested Volunteer Interview Questions
Minor Volunteer Parental Consent Form
Interactions and Behaviors Summary

Record Retention Schedule

Policy 7020

Files must be retained in accordance with the **Diocesan Record Retention Policy**, which can be found on the Heavenly Gate.

COMPLIANCE REVIEWS AND AUDITS

SERIES 8000

Data Reporting and Affidavit

Policy 8010

Data regarding safe environment efforts are reported to the diocese annually on a Parish or School Safe Environment Audit Affidavit provided by the Office of Child and Youth Protection. The data requested on the Audit Affidavit is subject to change annually; the links below will take you to the most current version of the Affidavit where you will find the documentation you need to provide. The Affidavit must be signed by the pastor.

Forms/Resources:

Parish Safe Environment Audit Affidavit Sample

School Safe Environment Audit Affidavit Sample

On-Site Compliance Reviews and Audits

Policy 8020

Reviews: The diocesan Office of Child and Youth Protection conducts periodic on-site compliance reviews at parishes and schools. On-site reviews may also be scheduled upon request.

Audits: The National Secretariat for Child and Youth Protection requires review compliance audits conducted by contracted auditing firms every three years at the diocese and selected parishes and schools.

Each person with safe environment responsibilities at the location must be present during both reviews and audits.

Audit Year

Policy 8030

The audit year is July 1 through June 30.

Self-Review

Policy 8040

A form is provided to assist the parish/school in conducting self-reviews.

Forms/Resources:

Safe Environment Self-Review

GENERAL SAFETY AND FACILITY SECURITY

SERIES 9000

Security and Safety for Minors' Activity Areas

Policy 9010

Individuals who have ongoing or high-risk contact with minors must know and comply with the security and emergency procedures at their locations.

Sex Offender Registry

Policy 9020

Information regarding convicted sex offenders can be found on the Colorado Bureau of Investigation's registry at <http://sor.state.co.us>. For county records, contact the local county's law enforcement agency.

Additional Safety Considerations

Policy 9030

Safety and security steps to consider include, but are not limited to the following:

- Make unannounced and random visits during activities.
- Conduct activities in full view of others.
- Hold no private meetings between adults and minors without a parent or second screened and trained adult present.
- Develop barriers to keep unauthorized individuals from accessing activity areas.
- Keep doors open or install windows in activity areas. It is further recommended that windows be positioned to accommodate a child's height.
- Ensure that interior rooms can be locked from the inside and that supervisors have access at all times.
- Restrooms:
 - Escort minors to restrooms in groups;
 - Designate restrooms for the sole use of minors;
 - Install self-contained restrooms and sinks in classrooms, nurseries, etc. Scale fixtures to appropriate size.
- Utilize check-in and check-out procedures.
- Install telephones or develop communication protocols in activity areas.
- Clearly identify all screened and trained adults.
- Remove minors' name tags prior to dismissal.
- Secure entrances and exits in activity areas.
- Secure outdoor activity areas used by minors.
- Ensure that minors do not have unsupervised access to supply closets and areas that are not in use during applicable activities.
- Ensure that minors do not have unsupervised access to alcoholic beverages, including altar wine.

Consult with the Diocesan Director of Properties when planning construction or remodeling for further considerations.

Glossary of Terms

Adult – A person who is eighteen years of age or older.

Bishops' Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People: *Promise to Protect, Pledge to Heal* (Charter) – The directives, mandates, and protocols articulated by the American Bishops to implement in all dioceses regarding the protection of minors.

Child Abuse and Neglect

- An act or omission that threatens the health or welfare of a child or that places a child in a situation that poses a threat of injury to the child's life or health.
- Any case in which a child is in need of services because the child's parents, legal guardians, or custodians fail to take the same actions to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, or supervision that a prudent parent would take.
- Actions resulting in identifiable and substantial impairment of, or substantial risk of impairment of, the child's intellectual or psychological functioning or development.
- Any case in which a child is subjected to unlawful sexual behavior.

CBI – A Criminal Background Investigation conducted by an outside company.

Code of Conduct – The Diocesan Sexual Misconduct Policy serves as the Code of Conduct for all clergy, religious, employees, and volunteers in the Diocese.

Documentation – Proof or evidence that something occurred.

Employee – An individual who receives compensation for services performed on behalf of the parish/school.

Event – A regular or extraordinary activity in which minors are involved that is a ministry of the parish or school.

Helper – A minor who assists adults at events. Helpers have no supervisory authority and are not to be left alone with other minors.

High-Risk – Any event that presents unique risks, for example: overnight retreats and trips, off-site events, activities with extended hours, driving, home visitations, private meetings, etc. (If you are unsure whether an event is considered high-risk, contact the Office of Child and Youth Protection for assistance.)

Minor – A person below 18 years of age, or one who is age 18 years or over, and who habitually lacks the use of reason is to be considered equivalent to a minor. (Charter p.20, note 1.1)

Ongoing Contact – Recurring interactions with minors on behalf of the parish/school or any outside organization that follow a regular schedule.

Ongoing Event– A recurring activity. Examples include faith formation classes, youth group meetings, choir practices, etc.

Outside Groups – Organizations that involve minors that are not ministries of the parish.

Outside Service Providers – Companies that provide needed services to the parish, like vendors, repair companies, etc.

Peer Leader – A minor who has been formally designated by the parish or school to help facilitate the activities of other minors.

Safe Environment – An environment that provides controlled and supervised interaction between adults and minors for the purpose of preventing child abuse or neglect as outlined by diocesan policy and the Charter.

Sexual Misconduct / Peer Sexual Misconduct: Any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors, assault, sharing of sexual images, possession of child pornography, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature between an adult and a minor, or between minors involved in any diocesan, parish, or school event.

Supervisor – A screened and trained adult who has been designated to oversee individuals for all or any portion of an event.

Volunteer – An unpaid person who has ongoing or high-risk contact with minors.