



Diocese of Manchester

Renewing Our Promise

TRAINING BULLETIN



Diocese of Manchester
The Office for Ministerial Conduct
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Dear Friends,

This *Renewing Our Promise* refresher bulletin is a training tool for all Diocese of Manchester employees and volunteers who work with children and youth in our parishes, schools, and camps. This bulletin is intended to supplement and review the information that was covered at your *Protecting God's Children* training session.

Renewing Our Promise deals with the topic of child sexual abuse. In this issue, you will learn about ways to keep your children safer, steps you can take to prevent abuse, what to do if you suspect that a child is being abused, and how to respond to a child who has been victimized. We ask that you read this bulletin and keep it for future reference. Please share its contents with other concerned adults.

Our diocese is committed to protecting children. Together, and with God's help, we can continue to promote a culture of openness and awareness, and a commitment to child safety within our Church and in the larger community.

We are grateful for you and for all that you do for the children and youth of our diocese.

Reverend Edward J. Arsenault
Diane Murphy Quinlan
Mary Ellen D'Intino

How to help...

Recovery from child sexual abuse is a process, but the most important factor is how we respond to a victim of sexual abuse. Believing the child and treating him or her with kindness, care, and concern is a major step towards recovery. Intervention by an experienced professional is essential. The Diocese of Manchester's Office for Healing and Pastoral Care offers pastoral support, outreach, and professional assistance to persons who report having been sexually abused by people representing the church. **You may contact the Office for Healing and Pastoral Care of the Diocese of Manchester at 603-668-0014, Ext. 233 or 1-800-475-5585.**

Prayer for Protecting God's Children

Lord, help us to be guardians of your children watchful, protective and aware of any harm that may be done to them. Help us to keep them in our care so they may grow to experience your love and grace in a world free from violence.

Jesus, you who gathered the little children by your side, help us to find the courage to trust our instincts to speak up and let it be known when we fear that a child is in danger.

Guide us to place our trust in the knowledge that we have gained through what we have learned here today at this training.

We ask you, Lord, to make us protectors of your children whom you have entrusted to our care, so that we will always keep them safe and shield them from any wrongdoing.

Amen

How to respond...

When a child discloses that he or she has been abused, it is important to respond in a kind, gentle manner. Here are some suggestions:

- Listen
- Avoid expressing shock, outrage, or disappointment
- Tell the child that he/she did the right thing by telling
- Assure the child that the abuse was not his/her fault
- Avoid asking a lot of questions; this is best left to professionals
- Do not promise to keep the abuse a secret
- Remember that the child may have been threatened; assure the child that you will help keep him/her safe and that he/she is not in trouble
- Do not threaten or condemn the perpetrator
- Avoid questions that make the child feel guilty or responsible such as, "Why didn't you say anything sooner?"
- Follow reporting requirements as soon as possible

5 Steps

A Plan to Protect

1 Know the Warning Signs

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

**What are some of the warning signs?
What concrete action can you take if you
see some of these warning signs?
Know the warning signs that an adult
may wish to perpetrate abuse.**

Pay attention to an adult who...

- Always finds reasons to spend time alone with children or youth
- Prefers time and friendships with children or youth more than with adults
- Gives special gifts to children or youth, especially without permission
- Goes overboard with touching children or youth
- Always wants to wrestle with and tickle children or youth
- Bends rules for certain children or youth
- Allows children to engage in activities their parents would not allow
- Has “favorite” or preferred children or youth
- Favors children or youth with certain physical characteristics
- Prefers to be with children who are particularly vulnerable
- Treats children or youth as if they were adults
- Discourages other adults from participating or monitoring
- Wants to keep secrets with children or youth
- Ignores standard policies about interacting with children or youth
- Seems to think the rules do not apply to them
- Uses inappropriate language or swearing with children or youth
- Tells “off color” jokes to children or youth
- Introduces pornography to children or youth
- Seems to have an “obsession” with children or youth

2 Control Access

Controlling access means we are careful about whom we allow to work with our children. It is important to control access so that we don't let child molesters near our children. We also can send a message to potential child molesters that we are alert about child sexual abuse.

**What are some of the ways the parish can
control access to children?**

Control who has access to children in programs.

- Use written, standard applications
- Check references
- Check previous employment
- Obtain criminal background checks
- Interview face-to-face
- Communicate your commitment to a safe environment
- Know the *Promise to Protect, Pledge to Heal* Policy and the Code of Ministerial Conduct.



God's Children

Monitor All Programs

All programs for children should be supervised. A close eye should be kept on all programs that involve children. Child molesters look for ways to spend time alone with children. If they know someone is watching them, they have more trouble finding opportunities to abuse without getting caught.

What concrete ways can the parish monitor programs?

Monitor all parish or school programs that involve children or vulnerable adults.

- Identify and restrict access to secluded areas
- Lock doors to unused rooms
- Meet with children in a place where others can walk by and see in
- Do spot checks
- Require prior approval before any new programs are started
- Require the involvement of more than one adult in running or supervising all programs

Be Aware

Being aware means that parents should know what is going on in the lives of their own children and pay attention to subtle signs of a problem. Parents should talk to their children, listen to them, and observe them.

When we observe and communicate with our children, we are more likely to detect the signs if they are in danger. We can notice a sudden change in behavior, if they get moody or aggressive, lose interest in school, or stop taking care of their personal hygiene.

What are some concrete ways we can be aware?

Some possible warning signs that a child may be in danger

- A sudden change in behavior
- May become moody or aggressive
- May lose interest in school
- Grades may drop
- May stop taking care of personal hygiene
- Does not enjoy people s/he used to enjoy
- Does not want to spend time alone with a particular adult
- Sleeplessness
- Gut feeling that something isn't right

Communicate Your Concerns

"Communicate your concerns" means telling someone when you are uncomfortable with a situation or if you suspect abuse. It means paying attention to your own feelings and not waiting until it's too late.

Only by communicating concern can we use our knowledge to protect children. Even if abuse is not occurring, it is still important to let others know when you have concerns.

How do you report abuse?

Reporting Sexual Abuse and Neglect of Minors

- Reporting Requirements of Adults under New Hampshire Law. In accordance with New Hampshire law, any adult who has reason to suspect that a minor has been abused or neglected must personally report the suspicions to the Division for Children, Youth and Families ("DCYF") at **(800) 894-5533**.
- Reporting Requirements of Church Personnel. Church personnel who have reason to suspect that a minor has been sexually abused by other church personnel have additional reporting obligations. When the alleged victim is a minor, in addition to reporting to DCYF, church personnel must immediately personally report the suspicion to local law enforcement and to the Delegate for Ministerial Conduct at **(603) 669-3100**. When the alleged victim no longer is a minor, church personnel must immediately personally report the suspicion to the Delegate for Ministerial Conduct at **(603) 669-3100**. Church personnel may seek the advice or assistance of their pastor, principal, or supervisor if doing so does not unduly delay the report.
- Reporting Requirements of the Office for Ministerial Conduct. The Office for Ministerial Conduct will follow the reporting requirements for all church personnel. In addition, whenever it has reason to suspect that a minor has been sexually abused by church personnel, the Office for Ministerial Conduct immediately will make a report to the New Hampshire Attorney General's office.

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10 Ways to Keep Children Safer

1

PREPARE YOUR CHILD

Teach children basic safety rules so that they are confident and prepared, rather than fearful.

6

TEACH THE BUDDY SYSTEM

Children and teens are safer when they stay with a friend or adult. This applies to walks, trips to the bathroom, outings, etc.

2

ROLE-PLAY

Act out or discuss potentially dangerous situations so that children can practice how to respond.*Resource: What Would You Do? A Kid's Guide to Tricky and Sticky Situations by Linda Schwartz is an excellent resource guide for parents and their preteens and young adolescents.

7

USE A CODE WORD

Choose a special code word that only you and your child know. Explain that if you ever send anyone unexpected to pick up your child, that person will use the code word.

3

REVIEW AND PRACTICE

Children learn from repetition. Research shows that safety lessons need to be reviewed 5-10 times per year.

8

HELP IDENTIFY TRUSTED ADULTS

Talk with your child about trusted adults. Specifically identify who a child should go to in an emergency, such as person using a cash register, a mother with children, a teacher, etc.

4

SET BODY BOUNDARIES

Make children aware of the private areas of their body ("the areas covered by your bathing suit") and explain that they should say no and then tell a trusted adult if anyone tries to touch them.

9

TEACH TELEPHONE SKILLS

Teach your child your home phone number, how to dial "O" and "911" for help, and how to use a pay phone.

5

DISCUSS GOOD AND BAD SECRETS

Teach children that some secrets are okay to keep, but help them to understand that some secrets are bad. Tell them that if anyone wants them to keep a secret about touching, they should not keep the secret and should tell a trusted adult right away.

10

INSIST ON BACKGROUND SCREENINGS

Insist that all adults who work with your children have had background checks and have agreed to abide by a code of conduct. Make sure that all persons who work with your children have been properly trained and have had background checks.

Guidelines for Expressing Affection in Pastoral Ministry

Appropriate ways to express affection

- Side hugs
- Shoulder to shoulder hugs
- Pats on the shoulder or back
- Hand-shakes
- "High-fives" and hand slapping
- Verbal praise
- Touching hands, faces, shoulders and arms of minors
- Arms around shoulders
- Holding hands while walking with small children
- Sitting beside small children
- Kneeling or bending down for hugs with small children
- Holding hands during prayer
- Pats on the head when culturally appropriate. For example, this gesture should typically be avoided in Thai or Vietnamese communities.

Facts to know

Abuse of children and minors is committed by:

11%
strangers

29%
relatives

60%
others known by the victims

Inappropriate ways to express affection

- Inappropriate embraces
- Kisses on the mouth
- Holding minors over five years old on the lap
- Touching bottoms, chests or genital areas
- Showing affection in isolated areas such as bedrooms, closets, staff-only areas or other private rooms
- Sleeping in bed with a child
- Touching knees or legs of minors
- Wrestling with minors
- Tickling minors
- Piggyback rides
- Any type of massage given by a minor to an adult
- Any type of massage given by an adult to a minor
- Any form of unwanted affection
- Compliments that relate to physique or body development