

CHURCH OF ST. ISIDORE SAFETY AND WELL BEING POLICY

The safety and well being of all children and elders who use our parish facilities is of paramount importance to us. Every new volunteer who works with or has potential contact with children or elders in our parish must complete the Archdiocese's *Protecting God's Children* (VIRTUS) Training as well as complete yearly CORI checks. Every volunteer is also asked to read and sign the "Ministerial Code of Behavior" (see "Documents" section of this manual) which outlines the responsibilities and expected codes of conduct for both volunteers and paid staff in the Archdiocese.

Guidelines have been established to insure, to the best of our ability, that no child from St. Isidore is placed into a situation of risk:

- No volunteer should be alone with a child in a room with a closed door.
- Volunteers assisting a child in a restroom must be accompanied by another adult.
- No child is allowed off parish property without two adults present.
- A signed permission slip from the parents or legal guardians are necessary to conduct ministries or field studies off the St. Isidore campus.

Although volunteers are not legally mandated reporters, we ask them to consider themselves morally mandated reporters. Paid parish staff members and members of the Child Abuse Prevention (CAP) Team are legally mandated reporters and **MUST**, under penalty of law, report any suspected case of abuse that they witness or are made aware of. Should a volunteer suspect a case of child abuse, it is critical that the allegation be reported to the Massachusetts Department of Social Services (DSS) (see section on Reporting Procedures). Volunteers should also report it to a staff member or member of the Child Abuse Prevention Team. If they are not comfortable making this report themselves, they should report it immediately to a member of the parish staff or

CAP Team whose responsibility to follow up with civil and church authorities is outlined in the section "Reporting Child Abuse to Civil and Church Authorities".

Safe Environment Guidelines

The following guidelines offer direction for St. Isidore Parish Child, Adolescent and Elderly Ministry Volunteers. Creation of a safe environment is critical for the personal safety of children as well as for the protection of adult Ministry Volunteers. It is the intent of these guidelines to eliminate the possibility of unsafe situations, to create safe settings where ministry to the children of St. Isidore Parish takes place and to set specific safety protocols. These guidelines apply to all educational, social, Ministerial programs and parish sponsored events such as Cub Scouts.

1. Public Arena Activities

It is advised that ministry to children occurs in an open and public setting. Examples of public areas of St. Isidore Parish include:

- The lower church hall where other persons are present or likely to be present
- The main church
- The sacristy with doors open

2. Two Adult Rule

No child is to be alone in a closed area or private room with one adult. Two adults must be present at all times. Spaces at St. Isidore that would be considered closed or private include:

- Bathrooms
- Area behind the altar
- Rooms and offices within the rectory
- Vehicles
- Supply closets

3. Transportation of Children

Ministry volunteers are never to be alone with a child, including in a motor vehicle.

- Ministry Volunteers may not transport a child alone under any circumstance
- Two volunteers must wait with a child. If a parent is late for pick up, a call should be made to the parent.
- If an emergency exists, the volunteer must call **911**.

4. Ministry Volunteer/Children Ratio

Adequate adult supervision is necessary to allow for a safe environment for children.

- 2 adults for every 6-10 preschoolers
- 2 adults for every 8-12 children under age 18

5. Ministry Volunteer Age Requirements

All Ministry Volunteers at St. Isidore Parish must be at least 17 years of age. Only Ministry volunteers may organize or supervise activities for children and must always be present during the activities. Assistants, who are between ages 12-17, may support the Ministry Volunteer in an activity, but always under the direct supervision of the adult.

6. Ministry Observation by Parents and Supervisory Staff

Parents may visit any educational or social activity at any time without notice. The Director of Religious Education, clergy or other supervisory staff are encouraged to visit any Ministry involving children.

Procedures to Follow in an Unsafe or Threatening Situation

Every Ministry Volunteer must be alert to the environment around the children in his or her care. Circumstances can occur that may threaten those in a particular setting. Examples include:

- Fire
- Intruder
- Out of control behavior of a child or parent

1. Fire

- Know each building exit locations
 - Know locations of fire extinguishers
 - Know locations of building telephones
 - Ushers' Room in Church Lobby
 - Side entrance hallway in lower church
- Remove children from immediate danger
- Call **911**.

2. Intruder

- Doors to church should be monitored.
- Close doors, lock if possible. Call **911**.
- Keep children down low, behind locked door.
- Remove children to safe place if possible
- No child is to travel alone to bathroom or other destination away from his group and adult leader.

3. Out of control behavior of a child or parent

- Stop any activity that is deemed unsafe
- Remove the out of control child to a safe place.
- Call parent.
- Attempt may be made to calm child.
- Call **911**, if necessary, to protect child or others
- Notify DRE or other supervising adult
- Utilization of other adult Ministry Volunteers to remain with other children and assist in care of out of control child

- The out of control parent should be removed from the presence of children if possible.
- Call **911**, if situation is not able to be de-escalated

Procedures to Follow in a Medical Emergency

Injuries and medical emergencies may occur. The Adult Ministry volunteer remains in charge until parent and or EMT's have arrived. All persons are to be treated with Universal Precautions in order to protect both the victim and the caregiver. First Aid Kits are located in the Parish Hall kitchen and in the Usher's closet at the entrance to the church.

- Stay with the child.
- **Do Not** move child if the child has suffered a fall
- Call another adult or adolescent to bring First Aid Kit
- Call **911** as indicated by the severity of the situation
- Call parent
- Follow Universal Precautions

Universal Precautions

Universal precautions protect both the victim and the caregiver from the transmission of bloodborne pathogens present in blood and other body fluids that can cause disease in humans. Examples of circumstances which may occur in the church setting in which Universal Precautions should be used are:

- Cuts and scrapes
- Nosebleeds
- Vomitus
- Human biting

Protocols to follow would include:

- Vinyl gloves used as a protective barrier. Found as the top item inside the First Aid Kit.
- Hand gauze pads, tissues, paper towels to the child to hold against the wound or bloody nose.

- Place gloves on hands before assisting the child or cleaning up vomitus.
- Wash hands immediately with soapy water when gloves are removed.
- Clothing stained with blood or vomitus should be changed. Soiled clothing should be placed in a plastic bag.
- Keep all other children away from the area.
- Report all injuries and illnesses to parent and DRE.

Procedures for Guideline Violations

When, due to unforeseen circumstances, guidelines have been violated, the responsible Ministry Volunteer is to report the incident to the CAP Team and/or the Director of Religious Education at St. Isidore by telephone or e-mail.

- Telephone: (978) 897-9790
- E-mail: capteam@applevalleycatholic.org

This communication should take place at the earliest and no later than 24 hours.

When protocol violations are witnessed, it is the Ministry volunteer's responsibility to:

- Speak to the person who may have acted in violation of safety guidelines, explaining your concern for the volunteer's protection along with that of the child.
- When any doubt about reporting exists, it is always advised to report.

POLICIES FOR OFF SITE EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

St. Isidore Parish requires that all off-site activities that involve children, adolescents or teens under the age of 18 require a consent form (see Documents Section) to be filled out by a parent/guardian before participating. All chaperones must be trained and have a current and completed CORI check.

Occasionally through the Generations of Faith program, there may be occasions when groups of children and/or teens meet independently. They will be supervised by adult facilitators that are VIRTUS trained and CORI'd.

VOLUNTEER POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Application Process for Parish Volunteers

St. Isidore Parish is committed to keeping our children safe. Policies are in place to assist in this process. Volunteer candidates must be known as persons of good character by St. Isidore Parish. Necessary requirements are:

- Active participation in the worship and social life of the parish.
- A completed and signed St. Isidore Volunteer Application Form (see Documents Section).
- Two (2) written/verbal references - Ideally, one of these references should be from the volunteer candidate's previous parish. While the second reference may be personal or professional, it should relate to the candidate's suitability for the position for which they are volunteering.
- **A completed Massachusetts Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) check as well as agreement to participate in yearly CORI checks by the Archdiocese.** CORI is a yearly requirement of the Archdiocese of Boston for all staff and volunteers. (Note that an additional check will be conducted in other states if the volunteer candidate has resided outside of Massachusetts.)
- Attendance at *VIRTUS Protecting God's Children* Training Session.
- Signed Statement of Agreement of the Archdiocese of Boston's Code of Ministerial Behavior.

VOLUNTEER APPLICATION
CHURCH OF ST. ISIDORE
Stow, Massachusetts

This form must be completed by all new volunteers who work with children, youth or the elderly.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____

Work Phone: _____

Email Address: _____ (confidential)

Please describe your previous work with children, youth or the elderly. If you have worked or volunteered in another parish, please include that information and use as one of the references.

References:

1. Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Relationship: _____

2. Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Relationship: _____

Have you completed VIRTUS Training? Where/When? (over)

**PROMISE TO ABIDE BY ST. ISIDORE PARISH
CARE AND SAFETY GUIDELINES**

I have received and read a copy of the St. Isidore Parish's Safety and Well-being Policies and Documents. I promise to abide by their requirements whenever I am acting on behalf of St. Isidore's Parish or share a responsibility for children who participate in parish-sponsored programs or activities for children. I also agree to participate in any parish required training and to submit to yearly CORI evaluations.

Signed: _____

Name (printed): _____

Date: _____

(office)

CORI Form: _____

VIRTUS Training: _____

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT TO CIVIL AND CHURCH AUTHORITIES

Procedure for Reporting to Civil Authorities

To report possible child abuse or neglect in Massachusetts, **you must first file an oral report by calling the Child-at-Risk Hotline at 1-800-792-5200** to notify the appropriate area office of the Department of Social Services (DSS). Even if you complete the 51A Report Form, you must also first phone DSS directly or the Child-at-Risk Hotline. For information on how to report child abuse and neglect outside of Massachusetts, please call the National Child Abuse Hotline, 1-800-4-A-CHILD.

DSS relies on reports from professionals and other concerned individuals to learn about children who may need protection. DSS receives reports on more than 100,000 children each year. Certain professionals are mandated to report child abuse and neglect (listed below); however, anyone can report child abuse and neglect. If you learn that a child has been abused or neglected, or if you are concerned that a child may be in danger of abuse and neglect, **please first call DSS and file an oral report immediately - before you mail or fax the 51A Report Form (see Documents Section)**. Qualified professionals are available 24 hours a day to take reports and address your concerns.

When you call DSS to report child abuse and neglect, please do your best to provide the following information:

- The name, address, sex, date of birth or approximate age, present whereabouts of the reported child or children, and any other children in the household;
- The names, addresses and telephone numbers of the child's parents or other persons responsible for the child's care;
- The primary language spoken by the child and the child's caretaker;
- If you are a mandated reporter: your name, address, telephone number, profession and relationship to the child;

- if you are a non-mandated reporter: your name, address, telephone number, profession and relationship to the child; or you may remain anonymous;
- The nature and extent of the abuse or neglect;
- Any evidence or knowledge of prior injury, abuse, maltreatment or neglect;
- Your opinion of current risk to the reported child and to any other child in the home or substitute care setting;
- If the above information was given to you by a third party, the identity of that person, unless the third party has requested anonymity;
- The circumstances under which you first became aware of the child's alleged injuries, abuse or neglect;
- Any action taken to treat, shelter or assist the child; and
- Any additional information you believe may be helpful in establishing the cause of the child's injury or the person responsible.

Mandated Reporters

Massachusetts law requires many professionals who work with children to notify DSS if they suspect that any child has been, or is at risk of being, abused or neglected.

Massachusetts law defines the following professionals as mandated reporters:

- Physicians, medical interns, hospital personnel engaged in the examination, care or treatment of persons, medical examiners;
- Psychologists, emergency medical technicians, dentists, nurses, chiropractors, podiatrists, optometrists, osteopaths;
- Public or private schoolteachers, educational administrators, guidance or family counselors;
- Office of Child Care Services licensors;
- Day care and child care workers, including any person paid to care for, or work with, a child in any public or private facility, or home or program funded or licensed by the Commonwealth, which provides day care or residential services. This includes child care resource and referral agencies, as well as voucher management agencies, family day care and child care food programs;
- Social workers, foster parents, probation officers, clerks magistrate of the district courts, and parole officers;
- Firefighters or police officers;
- School attendance officers, allied mental health and licensed human services professionals;
- Psychiatrists, and clinical social workers, drug and alcoholism counselors; and
- Priests, rabbis, clergy members, ordained or licensed ministers, leaders of any church or religious body, accredited Christian Science practitioners, or a person employed by a church or religious body to supervise, educate, teach, train or counsel a child on a regular basis.

Mandated reporters who are staff members of medical or other public or private institutions, schools or facilities, must either notify the Department directly or notify the person in charge of the

institution, school or facility, or his/her designee, who then becomes responsible for filing the report. Should the designee/person in charge advise against filing, the staff member retains the right to contact DSS directly.

Massachusetts law requires mandated reporters to **immediately make an oral report to the Department of Social Services (DSS)** when, in their professional capacity, they have reasonable cause to believe that a child under the age of 18 years is suffering from abuse or neglect. You should report any physical or emotional injury resulting from abuse, including sexual abuse; or any indication of neglect, including malnutrition; or any instance in which a child is determined to be physically dependent upon an addictive drug at birth.

After you file an oral report with DSS, a written report must be submitted to DSS within 48 hours after the oral report has been filed. Please note that any mandated reporter who fails to file required oral and written reports can be punished by a fine of up to \$1,000.00.

During the screening and investigation of a 51A Report, any mandated reporter who has information that she believes might aid the Department in determining whether a child has been abused or neglected shall, upon request by DSS, disclose the relevant information to the Department. Under the law, mandated reporters are protected from liability in any civil or criminal action, and from any discriminatory or retaliatory actions by an employer.

CONFIDENTIALITY

At times, children and adolescents may share information in confidence with a Volunteer Minister. We may become known to the child as a trusted and safe adult because of our roles as Volunteer Ministers. Children and adolescents have a right to expect that their concerns are kept in confidence except when their safety or the safety of another is in jeopardy.

Ministry volunteers must be open with children/adolescents who report information suggestive of a child in danger, that their confidence cannot be kept. Adults are to be clear and consistent about the limits of confidentiality. These serious situations may be life threatening and include the following:

- neglect, physical or sexual abuse
- threat of harm to him/herself
- threat of harm to others

Seal of Confession

Massachusetts law fully protects penitents within the Sacrament of Penance from betrayal. In practice, the Roman Catholic Church strictly prohibits a confessor from disclosing a penitent's sins to others and severely limits how he may use the knowledge he gains about a penitent within the sacramental forum.

However, Massachusetts law defines priests, rabbis, and clergy members as mandated reporters.

ARCHDIOCESE OF BOSTON PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING ABUSE TO CIVIL AND CHURCH AUTHORITIES

Child or young person who is being abused and is now under age of 18:

Civil Law: When a mandated reporter has reasonable cause to believe that a person under the age of 18 is suffering abuse or neglect, he/she is to report it immediately to the Department of Social Services (DSS).

Massachusetts Department of Social Services
(800) 792-5200
(617) 748-2000
www.dsskids.org

Archdiocese of Boston Law: All clergy, archdiocesan personnel and volunteers are required to contact the appropriate civil authorities when a person has knowledge or reasonable cause to suspect that a person under 18 years of age is being, or has been, abused or neglected.

Person who is being abused by clergy, archdiocesan personnel or volunteers:

Civil Law: as above

Archdiocese of Boston Law: Any person may make a complaint to ecclesiastical authorities concerning child abuse by clergy, archdiocesan personnel, or volunteers. This may be made in addition to a civil complaint. The complaint may be made directly to:

John Connolly, Special Assistant to the Cardinal at (617) 782-2544
The Secretary for Ministerial Personnel (617) 746-5750
The Office of Pastoral Support and Outreach (866) 244-9603 or (617) 244-9603
The Parish Staff at St. Isidore's (978) 897-2710
The Apple Valley Catholic Collaborative CAP Team Chair (978) 897-3197
(Jack Deasy) or email to capteam@applevalleycatholic.org

Complaints received against archdiocesan personnel or volunteers must be reported to the Archdiocese within 24 hours and to the Massachusetts Department of Social Services immediately and a written report within 48 hours. If these violations are against Federal laws, the Archdiocese is mandated to report suspected violations to the U.S. Attorney and the FBI within 48 hours of learning of the suspected violations.

Person who was abused as a child but who is now an adult:

Civil Law: The person has the right to file a report with the local District Attorney.

The Statutes of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Chapter 119, S51A states:

The report to DSS must be made immediately by telephone and a written report submitted within 48 hours, containing:

- the names and addresses of the child and his parents or other person(s) responsible for his care, if known;
- the child's age; the child's sex;
- the nature and extent of the child's injuries, abuse, maltreatment, or neglect, including any evidence of prior injuries, abuse, maltreatment, or neglect;
- the circumstances under which the person required to report first became aware of the child's injuries, abuse, maltreatment, or neglect;
- whatever action, if any, was taken to treat, shelter, or otherwise assist the child;
- the name of the person or persons making such report

The Archdiocese of Boston's Policies and Procedures for the Protection of Children, Article 7 states:

Persons making a complaint about child abuse to the Church will normally be asked to provide the following information:

- the name of the person against whom the complaint is made and the name of the complainant;
- a detailed description of the alleged abuse, including relevant dates, times and circumstances;
- the names and contact information for persons who may have knowledge of the alleged abuse.

The Archdiocese will cooperate with civil authorities concerning investigations of a complaint of child abuse and conduct investigations with respect for civil law and the rights of individuals.

***CHURCH OF ST.
ISIDORE***

***CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION
(CAP) TEAM***

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

***429 GREAT RD.
STOW, MA***

***CHURCH OF ST.
ISIDORE***

VOLUNTEER PACKET