



**St. Francis of Assisi Parish
Safe Environment
Information
and
Procedures**



Questions and Answers about

Safe Environment

What does “Safe Environment mean?

“Safe Environment” refers to the setting that we create and maintain for the children and young people of St. Francis of Assisi Parish. We are committed to keeping our children “safe” whenever they participate in any parish sponsored activities.

How do you go about creating a “Safe Environment”?

Through various safety checks: Code of Ministerial Conduct, Safe Environment workshop, Parent Education and the C.O.R.I. review. The information on the next page summarizes the “Code of Ministerial Conduct” set forth by the Diocese of Worcester. We assure a safe environment for our children and young people by requiring that anyone in the parish who comes in contact with children and young people in any capacity (paid or volunteer) understands the Code of Ministerial Conduct and does not have a Criminal Record.

How can you be sure that the two conditions are met?

Parish Staff and volunteers are not allowed to participate in any parish activities (other than Parish wide event) unless they have attended a Safe Environment workshop and submitted to a C.O.R.I. review.

What is a C.O.R.I. review?

A C.O.R.I. is a review of criminal records to verify that the person has never been convicted of a crime.

How much does a C.O.R.I. review cost?

The Diocese of Worcester pays for the review, it is free of charge to the person whose record is being reviewed.

Summary of the Code of Ministerial Conduct

The public and private conduct of clergy, staff and volunteers can inspire and motivate people, but that conduct can also scandalize and undermine people's faith.

We have a responsibility to witness in all relationships the chastity appropriate to our state in life, whether celibate, married or single.

This includes seductive speech or gestures as well as physical contact that sexually abuses, exploits or harasses another person.

We are to provide safe environments in parishes, schools and institutions where children and others can be assured that their boundaries will not be violated.

We must show prudent discretion before touching another person, since we cannot control how physical touch will be received.

We must intervene when there is evidence of or reasonable cause to suspect that children are being abused in anyway..

We must report violations of misconduct to the appropriate civil and ecclesial authorities and then do what we need to see that justice is served for the victim, the offender and the community from which the victim and offender come.

What the Bishop says about Parent Education

Parents are the primary educators of their children in all matters. The bishops want all children to be given instructions on proper boundaries. Bishop McManus has directed each parish to provide educational materials to parents and to give instruction to all children and young people if "Personal Safety Instructions" are not being provided in the local schools. Parents are to be informed before any parish gives such instructions and given the opportunity to opt out.

What we are doing at St. Francis of Assisi Parish

At this time we at St. Francis of Assisi Parish are not giving instructions to the children and youth of the parish because it would be duplicate instruction. It is our policy to provide all of our parents, the booklet "*About Preventing Child Abuse*" and to keep parents advised as to what is being taught in our local schools. If it is found that Personal Safety is not being covered sufficiently or that what is being covered is contrary to Church teaching we will provide instructions for the levels that need it. Parents will be given advance notice; parents will be given the choice to opt out if they do not want their child to take part, and we will ask parents to sign a form stating their desire that their child not receive the instructions.

Important Numbers

Victims Service Coordinator: Judith Audette, L.I.C.S.W.

Phone: 508-929-4363 (a 24-hour confidential voicemail is available)

E-mail: jaudette@worcesterdiocese.org

Office Manager: Cathaleen Peloquin

Phone: 508-929-4361

E-mail: cpeloquin@worcesterdiocese.org

ONLINE TRAINING is available for people to complete from their own computer. At the completion of your training you will print a certificate of completion to be give to your organization. Please request training through your Safe Environment Coordinator who will need your email address in order to arrange for the training. If a local coordinator is unavailable, you can email your request directly to Cathaleen Peloquin at cpeloquin@worcesterdiocese.org and include your full name, parish/school/agency name and location and your staff or volunteer position.

Pastor

Fr. James Callahan

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St. Francis of Assisi Parish

Safe Environment Coordinator

Judy McCaffrey

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