

RESOURCE MATERIALS

WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

Child abuse includes, but is not limited to, the following:

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

TYPES OF CHILD ABUSE

Physical Abuse is any non-accidental physical injury to a child caused by an adult which results in or threatens serious injury. Often adults who physically abuse children do not intend to seriously injure the children but get carried away by anger and frustration in their own lives.

Neglect is the failure of a parent or guardian to provide a child with adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, education or supervision. Neglect is a chronic problem often resulting, not from poverty, but from lack of knowledge as to the proper care required by children.

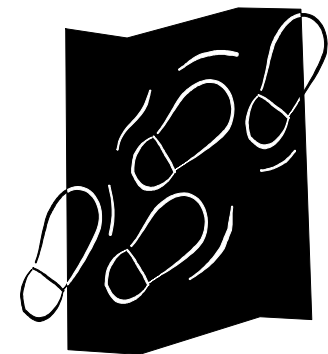
Sexual Abuse is any physical contact with a child by an adult or older child in a position of power over the child for the sexual gratification of the adult or older child. Other terms for sexual abuse include child molestation, incest (if the abuser is a member of the child's family), or child pornography. Usually, child sexual abuse is not violent, and the child knows the abuser.

Emotional Abuse is an important factor in all forms of child abuse. To be hurt so much by someone who should care and protect is very damaging to the emotional development of a child. Adults who do not physically harm a child may cause emotional harm by using words which threaten, harshly criticize, ridicule or harass.

WHO SHOULD BE AWARE?

Church personnel hold positions of trust in working with minors and are, therefore expected to act within the behavioral guidelines as presented.

Any person who functions under the auspices of the Diocese, its parishes, schools or other institutions, in a regular, significant relationship/role with children (e.g. teacher, employee, catechist, youth minister/coordinator of youth ministry, scout leader, coach or server coordinator) shares a sacred trust. These adults must be vigilant to guard against situations that can inflict harm, or that give rise to suspicions of potential child abuse. All engaged in ministry to and with children in our Diocese are obligated to fulfill the policies and procedures regarding child abuse and neglect.



SIGNS OF PHYSICAL ABUSE

1. A child has unexplained burns, bruises, broken bones, black eyes.
2. A child has fading bruises after an absence from class or regularly scheduled activity.
3. A child shrinks from the touch of adults or appears unusually fearful of adults
4. A child reports injury by an adult.

SIGNS OF NEGLECT

1. A child is frequently absent.
2. A child begs/steals food or money.
3. A child lacks medical or dental care, glasses, immunizations.
4. A child is consistently dirty, has severe body odor.
5. A child lacks sufficient food.
6. A child abuses alcohol or drugs.
7. A child states that no one provides care.

SIGNS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

1. A child exhibits change in behavior such as loss of appetite, nightmares, inability to sleep or withdrawal from usual activities and peer relationships.
2. A child returns to bedwetting or thumb sucking.
3. A child has genital pain, itching, swelling or bleeding.
4. A child indicates fear of a person or an intense dislike of being left somewhere or with a particular person.
5. A child shows unusual interest in or knowledge of sexual matters, expressing affection in ways inappropriate for a child of his or her age.

SIGNS OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE

1. A child shows extremes in behavior.
2. A child is either inappropriately adult or infantile.
3. A child is delayed in physical or emotional development.
4. A child reports lack of attachment to parents.

5. A child is exhibiting extremes of behavior, overly anxious to please, to assume blame or extremely passive or aggressive, demanding or undemanding.

PROCEDURES AIMED AT PREVENTING CHLD ABUSE

1. A child may receive scheduled, individual instruction or counseling from church personnel only with the consent of the child's parent or guardian.
2. A child may participate in an organized program sponsored by a parish or school only with the written consent of the child's parent or guardian.
3. At least two adults must be present for any activity for children sponsored by a parish or school.
4. No child may be disciplined physically or corrected with abusive language.
5. Church personnel must obtain the consent of a child's parent or guardian before inviting or allowing the child to visit in an adult's home.
6. Release children only to parents or guardians.
7. Have minors use the "buddy system" when they go on trips away from school or church property.

8. Ordinarily, rooms where instruction or counseling is given should have at least one window.

PROPER RESPONSE TO ACTUAL OR SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

1. Signs of abuse

If you observe that a child is exhibiting any one of the signs of child abuse, be aware that the presence of any one of the signs does not confirm abuse or neglect. However, **the presence of a number of these signs may be reason for the concern and possible exploration with a physician, psychologist etc. This should only occur after proper consultation with the supervisor /pastor or appropriate other staff.**

It is very important not to jump to conclusions but rather to look carefully at the entire situation for evidence that would give you reason to suspect child abuse. None of the signs alone proves that a child is being maltreated- but when the signs appear repeatedly this should prompt heightened concern.

2. Acts of abuse perpetrated by a cleric, employee or volunteer of the Diocese.

Any employee or volunteer who witnesses an act of child abuse perpetrated by a cleric, employee or volunteer of the diocese, has cause to suspect that such an

act has occurred, or receives a report of such an act, must report the incident immediately to the **Division of Family Services in Delaware (hot line number: 1-800-292-9582) or to the Department of Social Services in the Maryland county where the allegedly victim resides, or if different, where the abuse is alleged to have taken place (hot line number: 1-800-492-0618).** Immediately thereafter, the individual should promptly notify the appropriate supervisor and the Vicar General for Administration.

3. Potentially abusive behavior

Church Personnel who observe a cleric, employee or another volunteer behaving in a manner that may pose a potential risk to a child are to report the matter to the staff person to whom they are responsible without delay.

SUPERVISION PROCEDURES

1. Have an adequate number of adults present at events involving children and youth.
2. Monitor your facilities during church services and all school or other activities.
3. Release children only to parent or guardian.
4. Obtain parental permission, including a signed medical treatment form, before taking children or youth on trips.

TRUST IS YOUR GREATEST GIFT!

BEHAVIORAL GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH CHILDREN OR YOUTH

1. Do not provide minors with alcoholic beverage, tobacco, drugs, or anything that is prohibited by law.
2. Do not serve as chaperone for activities that conflict with curfew laws pertaining to minors.
3. Touching should be age appropriate and based on the need of the minor and not on the need of the adult. If a minor initiates physical contact, an appropriate, limited response is proper.
4. Do not engage in the physical discipline of a minor. Discipline problems should be handled in coordination with your supervisor and/or the parents of the minor.
5. Do not be alone with a minor in a residence, sleeping facility, locker room, rest room, dressing facility, or other closed room or isolated area that is inappropriate to a ministry relationship.
6. Do not take an overnight trip **alone** with a minor who is not a member of your immediate family.
7. Topics, vocabulary, recordings, films, games or the use of computer software or any other form of personal interaction or entertainment that could not be used comfortably in the presence of parents should not be employed with minors. Sexually explicit or pornographic material is forbidden.

8. Do not administer medication of any kind to a minor without written parental permission.
9. If you recognize inappropriate personal or physical contact developing between yourself and a minor, maintain clear professional boundaries between yourself and the minor or refer the minor to another adult supervisor.
10. If one- on -one pastoral care of a minor is necessary, avoid meeting in isolated environments. Schedule meetings at times and use locations that create accountability. Limit both the length and number of sessions and make appropriate referrals. Notify parents of the meetings.
11. Do not permit minors to cross roads by themselves unsupervised when they are in your custodial care.
12. Do not take photographs of minors while they are unclothed or dressing (e.g. in a locker room or bathing facility).

**For further information, contact:
Human Resources Office
1626 N. Union Street
Wilmington, DE 19806
302-573-3126**

DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

INFORMATION FOR CHURCH PERSONNEL



CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

