

Archdiocesan Youth Retreat Center

Safe Environment Protocol

The Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry takes the protection of young people very seriously. It must rely on its Parish group leaders to make their efforts to keep all young people and retreat participants safe and secure from possible harm.

USCCB, *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, November 2002. The charter was issued by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in 2002 as a response to the sexual abuse crisis in the United States. It addresses the Church's commitment to deal appropriately and effectively with cases of sexual abuse of minors by priests, deacons and other church personnel. It also deals with the Church's commitment to the pastoral, spiritual and emotional well-being of those who have been sexually abused and of their families. <http://www.usccb.org/ocyp/charter.htm>

As part of its youth protection efforts the following is required of all groups participating at the Archdiocesan Youth Retreat Center (AYRC):

- 1) Each parish, youth ministry or group with youth under the age of 18 participating in an event at the AYRC has responsibility for the screening by a third party and safe environment training of their youth ministry leaders and chaperones/volunteers, both Catholic and non-Catholic, *as required by the procedures for the Archdiocese of Newark.*
- 2) AYRC will require the pastor of each participating parish or Principal of non-parish schools to submit a letter to the Director of Youth and Young Adult Services at least 10 days before their scheduled retreat with minors, listing all chaperones names, certifying that all youth ministry leaders and chaperones/volunteers, both Catholic and non-Catholic, from that parish/school have been screened by a third party and safe environment trained, as required by the procedures of this archdiocese or the parish home diocese if outside the Archdiocese of Newark.
- 3) A copy of this letter will be kept on file and the AYRC will deny accommodations to and bar from participation in any activity scheduled if youth ministry leaders and chaperones/volunteers (and youth they accompany) of any parish/school fails to submit the required letter.

Introduction

The sexual abuse of Children and Vulnerable Individuals is reprehensible and tragic. It betrays the trust Children and Vulnerable Individuals naturally place in adults, especially those responsible for their instruction, welfare and guidance. The damage caused by sexual abuse is devastating and long lasting. It is even more tragic when its consequence is a loss of the faith that the Catholic Church has a sacred duty to foster. Sexual abuse of Children is "by every standard wrong and rightly considered a crime by society; it is also an appalling sin in the eyes of God" (Address by Pope John Paul II, to the Cardinals of United States and Conference Officers, April 23, 2002). Our obligation to protect Children and Vulnerable Individuals stems from the mission and example given to us by Jesus Christ himself, in whose name we serve.

We want to be as transparent and forthcoming as possible regarding the policies and procedures used by the Archdiocese. Our goal as an Archdiocesan Youth Retreat Center is to: (1) provide a safe and secure environment for the Children and Vulnerable Individuals in the Archdiocese; (2) provide an atmosphere conducive to a retreat experience that is free from worry and open to all that God has waiting for us.

Compliance with Policies

Each employee, lay volunteer, member of the clergy and Religious in the Archdiocese must be familiar and comply with the Archdiocesan Sexual Abuse Policy and be prepared to direct others to the policy and to procedures for reporting under the policy. Violations of the Archdiocesan Sexual Abuse Policy are grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment and possible legal prosecution. The Archdiocesan Sexual Abuse Policy provides guidance about the Archdiocese's expectations regarding certain conduct with minors and responsibilities.

If persons have any questions or doubts about how the Archdiocesan Sexual Abuse Policy applies to them, they should seek clarification from the Office of Safe Environments at 201-407-3256. If any person wants to make any allegation of sexual abuse pursuant to the Archdiocesan Sexual Abuse Policy, or to raise questions or issues anonymously, subject to the provisions above governing anonymous allegations, he or she may call 201-407-3256.

Compliance with the Archdiocesan Sexual Abuse Policy

Compliance with the Archdiocesan Sexual Abuse Policy and to laws and regulations that apply to the Archdiocese is of particular importance. The Archdiocese will support each member of the community, including laity, employees, volunteers, members of the clergy and Religious, in meeting their responsibility to comply with the law regarding sexual abuse of minors and to comply with the Archdiocesan Sexual Abuse Policy and provide the resources necessary for compliance. Questions concerning any legal responsibility should be referred to the Archdiocesan Legal Office.