
Saint Michael Church and School

Guideline and Procedures for the Safety and Protection of Children

Date: February 1, 2003

Under the direction of our Parish Council and Staff, we have implemented the suggestions of the Diocese with these documents which represent a proactive stance in keeping our children safe and from harm's way.

We will adhere to these procedures faithfully in all of our endeavors to minister to our children and youth.

We are awaiting the publication of the Diocesan Policy on Sexual Abuse of Minors. This will be made available to you upon publication. We are also awaiting the publication of an education program for organizations, volunteers, parents and children being prepared by the Ohio Community Services Council (OCSC). Upon receipt of the Diocesan Policy and the OCSC program, we will develop a training/education program for St. Michael.

**Background Investigation Procedure
For Staff and paid positions
At St. Michael Church and School**

1. Determine the final candidate or candidates to be screened before hiring. Require all candidates to complete an application. Make offer of employment contingent upon favorable information received on the background check. If the person does not pass the background check the position will be offered to the runner-up candidate.
2. Arrange to have fingerprints taken of candidate. Submit the fingerprints to the Bureau of Criminal Identification for processing and criminal record search. (Make arrangements through Independence Police Department.)
 - a. Submit candidate's application, resume and related documents along with his/her his/her signed release to conduct a background and criminal history check to an to an investigative service experienced in employee checks.
 - b. The suggested Screening guideline is as follows:
 - Verify highest education achieved.
 - Request county of residence criminal court check
 - Verify prior employment including dates of employment for all prior employers (not just references provided by applicant).
 - Check Social Security Number for validation.
3. Have results of all of the above sent to the Pastor of St. Michael within five business days for review.
4. If the candidate's record and background check are in good order, offer the candidate the position. If the records reflect a negative remark or a criminal record which requires that the candidate be denied employment, the candidate should be notified only that he or she is not being accepted for employment. The candidate has a right to a copy of the background check results. If an investigative service is used they should be informed to notify the candidate in writing the procedure under the FCRA to dispute or verify the record that caused the denial of employment. If an investigative service is not used, the candidate should be told that he/she will not be hired and should be give a copy of the background check.
5. If the record is disputed the candidate be informed to take up the dispute with the person or agency that supplied the information. The criminal background report can only be corrected through a court proceeding and cannot be corrected by BCII.

**Background Screening Procedure
For Saint Michael Church and School
Volunteers working with Children**

1. Each person who requests or is asked to volunteer to work with children in conjunction with part of any program associated with the parish must submit to a criminal record check prior to any unsupervised access to children in accordance with parish policy and the policies of the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland.

2. The volunteer must sign the parish release form that provides the volunteer's consent to allow the parish to conduct the criminal background check. The volunteer additionally agrees that if information is received that precludes the volunteer from working with children that the pastor will inform him/her confidentially.

3. After the signed release is obtained, arrangements will be made with the officer designated by the Chief of Police of Independence Police Department to obtain fingerprints of the Volunteer and submit them to the Bureau of Criminal Identification of Ohio for processing. The results of the criminal record check will be sent only to the Pastor of Saint Michael Church. If the results of the record check preclude the volunteer from working with children of the parish under Ohio laws and the policies of the Diocese of Cleveland, the Pastor will contact the volunteer to explain the results. If the background check indicates that there are no violations that would prevent the Volunteer's work with the children of the parish, the Pastor will provide the individual in charge of the specific youth program with written approval for the Volunteer involved.

If the Volunteer disputes the record that precludes him/her from working with the children of the parish, the Volunteer must be advised that he/she will have to contact the court where the violation took place. The BCII cannot change any criminal record.

4. All matters concerning the volunteer information and criminal record will be held in strict confidence and viewed only by the Pastor or Associate Pastor of Saint Michael Church.

Response to Allegations of Abuse of Minors

Each member of the parish should consider it his or her legal and moral responsibility to report suspected abuse whenever it comes to his or her attention regardless of where the abuse takes place. Reporting of abuse is a form of ministering to the needs of a person(s) crying out for help. The parish will seek to provide a supportive atmosphere, offering both objectivity and empathy as we seek to create a climate in which healing can take place.

If abuse is suspected, observed by or disclosed to a volunteer and/or a paid staff member of the parish, that person should report the incident immediately by following the steps below.

Reporting of Alleged Abuse of Minors

1. In all cases of alleged, suspected, or known child abuse or sexual misconduct by a cleric, religious, or seminarian, the information must be reported to civil law enforcement authorities (the local police department) and by calling the Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Family Services at 216-696-KIDS.
2. In all cases of alleged, suspected or known child abuse or sexual misconduct by a paid member of the parish staff or other paid Diocesan staff or volunteer, the information should be brought to the attention of the parish Pastor or Associate Pastor as soon as possible. In addition, the person with knowledge of the alleged abuse has the legal responsibility to report the allegation to civil authorities with the local police department and the Department of Children and Family Services. All allegations of abuse must be reported to the Department of Children and Family Services at 3955 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44115 or by calling their 24 hour hotline at 216-696-KIDS.
3. Diocese of Cleveland: The Diocesan Legal Office - 216-696-6525 ext 4590, talk to Palmira Juras.

Supervision of Children and Youth Youth Ministry Programs

1. All adults working as volunteers with children, including but not limited to Day School, CYO, PSR, Youth Fire, Drama Club and Scouts, should be background-checked.
2. Adults working with teens should never be alone with a teen. If a request is made for a one-to-one conference, it should be done in an “open” setting.
3. Following group events, at least two adult volunteers must remain on site until every child has been picked up.
4. There shall be at least one adult for each gender present at co-ed overnight events. At single gender overnight events, at least one of the two or more adults shall be of the same gender as the children/youth. Minimum age for overnight volunteers should be 21.
5. In situations where two adults per room are not available when children/youth are staying overnight, then no adult shall stay alone in a specific room with the children/youth. In those circumstances where adults are not staying in the rooms with the children/youth, special measures should be taken to assure the children/youth’s safety and supervision, such as adult hall monitors and periodic room checks by two adults of the same gender as those being checked. Parents should be made aware of housing accommodations.
6. The person in charge of each trip and/or retreat shall carry permission slips including permission for emergency care.
7. For parish-sponsored transportation to an event, two adults, preferably a male and female (for co-ed events), unrelated, should be in the car/van.
8. Retention of records (permission slips) shall be kept if an injury occurs.
9. Any adult (including a parent) who is not a regular Youth Minister, but will be with youth for any overnight trips shall be background-checked. This paragraph does not apply to parent/child events such as scout camping trips.
10. As new Youth Ministers are recruited, a background check must be conducted and written approval given by the Pastor before they work with youth.

IN ADDITION TO THESE GUIDELINES,
PLEASE SEE THE ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES REGARDING PSR STUDENTS
(page 6)

Supervision of Children and Youth
Parish School of Religion
Grades Preschool through High School

1. Teachers have the responsibility for setting a tone of mutual respect in the classroom. Name-calling, put-downs, bullying, harassment, etc. are not acceptable.
2. Windows in the classroom door area are to remain uncovered at all times.
3. Teachers meeting individually with a student before or after class should be visible from the hallway, with the door open.
4. No child may be disciplined or corrected with abusive or demeaning language.
5. A child is never to be touched by an adult in a way that can be construed as punitive. Corporal punishment of children is not permitted in any instance.
6. Students are never to be disciplined by being sent out of the room alone.
7. If a child must be removed from the classroom a note should be sent to the administrator with a responsible child. The administrator will remove the student.
8. A teacher is never to leave ANY student or the classroom unsupervised. Asking a neighboring teacher to monitor the class is acceptable.
9. Parents/visitors must stop in the Religion Office before going to a classroom.
10. Parents, volunteers, and staff may visit a classroom at any time.
11. The Director of Religious Education or his/her designee will periodically visit each classroom.
12. Any parents requesting early dismissal of students must personally come to the office to pick up those children. If driving themselves, students who are leaving early must provide a note from the parent. The PSR Director may also call the home to verify permission to leave early.