

sary for some parish communities when physical space for small group ministry may be limited.

Policy: Because of potential liability and concerns regarding safe environment, private homes/apartments cannot be used for youth ministry.

If public spaces are used, then the following policies must be observed:

Policy: The use of public spaces can be considered after all on-site options have been explored and must have written approval of the pastor.

Policy: Parents must have explicit knowledge of the details, nature and location of the program in which their young person is involved. These details need to include:

- Date, time and topic(s) of gatherings.
- Names and phone numbers of adult leaders.
- Name, address, and phone number of location.

Policy: Permission slips must be provided to parents with regard to their young person's involvement in a program held in a public space.

Policy: Students must remain in the designated areas.

Policy: Individual young people should never be left alone.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Preparedness

Policy: Youth ministries are to ensure that processes, individuals, organizations and resources are identified and accessible to prevent and respond to emergency situations. Minimally, this needs to include:

- Procedures for dealing with immediate treatment of youth in case of emergency, including providing the parent/guardian(s) of all youth with a written form authorizing emergency medical treatment.
- Procedures for an annual practice for emergency situations: fire, active shooters and tornado drills.
- Records of fire drills and seasonal tornado drills.
- Emergency procedures posted in meeting rooms and available to parents, youth and youth ministry team members.
- Identification of nearest emergency rooms and trauma centers.
- Emergency telephone numbers posted by office telephones.
- Supervision of parish grounds, recreational areas and other facilities when scheduled for use by youth.
- A file of written incident reports.

Medical Emergency

Policy: In life-threatening situations, always call 911.

Youth Ministry Leaders must be aware of directions to the nearest hospital or medical facility (both locally and when traveling off-site).

911 should be called when a person:

- Becomes unconscious.
- Has trouble breathing.
- Has chest pain or pressure.
- Is bleeding severely.
- Has pain or pressure in the abdomen that does not go away.
- Is vomiting/passing blood.
- Has seizures, a severe headache or slurred speech.
- Appears to have been poisoned.
- Has injuries to the head, neck or back.
- Has possible broken bones.

Accidents and Injuries

Policy: If there is an accident, do not make any judgment regarding liability or negligence. If an accident prompts a police investigation, cooperate fully by stating what you witnessed, but do not speculate or offer opinions about any matter. Politely refer all additional questions to the pastor or the Office of Legal Affairs at the Archdiocese of New York. You should not make any statements or comments to the press or news media; refer them to the pastor.

If there is an accident:

- Assist those involved and call for professional help if the injury warrants it.
- Wear gloves if blood is present.
- Comfort and protect the injured person.
- Complete an Incident Report (found in Forms).
 - Do not presuppose that the injury is minor enough not to warrant the completion of an Incident Report. Even minor cuts and bruises can become a health concern.
 - Be as concise and accurate as possible in completing all information.
 - Do not speculate or make any judgment regarding liability or negligence or commit to paying for medical treatment.
 - Immediately file the incident report with your pastor or the appropriate parish administrator and the archdiocesan Catholic Mutual (insurance) representative.

First Aid

Policy: Each parish youth ministry program must have a well-stocked and easily accessible first aid kit, which also includes feminine hygiene products. This kit is to accompany the group on any events off parish property.

Red Cross First Aid Kit recommendations: www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/anatomy-of-a-first-aid-kit

Best practice: Supervising ministry team members should have basic first aid and CPR training.

Policy: If a young person is injured and needs first aid, an incident report must be completed within 24 hours and submitted to the pastor.



Best practice: Anything besides a minor injury should be reported to your pastor as soon as possible.

Best practice: Review expiration dates on items in first aid kit annually.

Medications

It is preferable that all prescription medications be administered by a parent/legal guardian of the youth participant. If that is not possible, then the following policies apply.

Policy: If a young person is experiencing an emergency and needs medication that is readily available, e.g., an EpiPen™ for allergic reactions, adult youth leaders or the young person him/herself may administer the medication as directed on the container.

Policy: If youth need to take medication during an event or trip, the medication must be handed to a supervising adult leader in a resealable bag. The bag needs to be labeled in permanent marker with the name of the student, the date, and the times the medication should be administered. The bag must include instructions from the parent/guardian on how and when medication/treatments should be taken. Medications need to be stored by the supervising adult leader in a secure area. At the prescribed times, youth

can take their medications/treatments in the presence of a supervising adult leader. Medications/treatments that require any form of disrobing should be self-administered by the student privately. Exceptions to this policy are medications that need to be in the constant possession of the youth (e.g. insulin, inhalers, or epinephrine pens).

Expressing Intent to Harm Self or Others

Policy: If a young person expresses a plan to hurt him/herself or others:

- Take his/her words seriously.
- Do not leave the young person alone. Engage another adult or two to remain with the student or take the necessary next steps.
- Contact the parent/guardian(s).
 - Calmly share the conversation you have had with the young person and your reasons for concern.
 - Ask the parent/guardian to come immediately.
- Contact the pastor. Let him know what has happened and the steps you have taken.
- Contact health professionals or the authorities, if warranted.
- Depending on the urgency of the situation, you may need to contact emergency medical services or police.

Inclement Weather

Policy: Know your parish’s disaster preparedness plan and follow all evacuation warnings when facing severe weather.

- If local public or Catholic schools cancel, youth ministry events should be canceled as well.
- Monitor weather conditions prior to events.
- Notify parents/guardians regarding cancellations/early dismissals.
- Do not allow youth who drive to leave without notifying a parent/guardian.
- Secure property after all have departed.

POLICY: REPORTING AN INCIDENT OF ABUSE

Whenever there is reasonable cause to suspect that a minor has been the victim of child abuse or maltreatment, including sexual abuse, the Office of Legal Affairs or the Safe Environment Office will be notified and will make an immediate report to the appropriate civil authorities, including law enforcement, the local District Attorney’s office, and/or the New York Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment if applicable. Staff members who are New York State mandated reporters must also fully comply with the requirements of the law. Any adult who has reasonable cause to suspect any incident of child abuse, sexual misconduct, violations of safe environment policies, or violations of Codes of Conduct must report it immediately to the youth ministry coordinator. If that is not practical (e.g., if the complaint involves conduct by the youth ministry coordinator), then the complaint must be reported to the pastor or the director of the archdiocesan Safe Environment Office. Any allegation of child sexual abuse or sexual misconduct must also be reported to the director of the archdiocesan Safe Environment Office. If there is an emergency situation or an immediate threat or danger, call 911 and seek medical attention (if necessary). Persons who report alleged incidents pursuant to this policy, and those who cooperate with investigations of such reports, shall be entitled to the protections of the archdiocesan “whistleblower” policy. The archdiocese expressly prohibits any form of retaliation, including harassment, intimidation, or adverse employment actions against personnel who in good faith raise suspected violations of law, cooperate in inquiries or investigations, or identify potential violations of archdiocesan policies.

Process to Be Followed in Response to Suspected Child Abuse Internal to the Youth Ministry Program and Involving a Parish Employee or Volunteer

An “internal incident” is an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor made against any person within the parish youth ministry program (priest, deacon, sister, brother,

layman, laywoman, employee, volunteer). In response, the following is done:

- The person(s) receiving the information immediately informs the youth ministry coordinator.
- The youth ministry coordinator notifies the pastor and immediately calls the archdiocesan Safe Environment Office (646-794-2807). If Safe Environment Office cannot be reached, the Office of Legal Affairs is called.
- The Safe Environment Office or the Office of Legal Affairs will immediately notify law enforcement. The minor’s parent or guardian must be immediately notified as well.
- If there is an emergency situation or an immediate threat or danger to the security or safety of the child, the pastor or coordinator of youth ministry must call the police immediately. In an emergency, they should not wait to speak to the Safe Environment Office before dialing 911. The first priority is to ensure the child’s safety.

Process to Be Followed in Response to Suspected Child Abuse External to the Parish Youth Ministry and Not Involving a Parish Employee or Volunteer

An “external incident” is something that happens to a child/youth outside of the parish youth ministry program and not committed by a member of the parish staff. The report is typically a self-report by a child/youth to a youth ministry leader. In response the following is to be done:

- The person receiving the information immediately notifies the coordinator of youth ministry.
- The coordinator of youth ministry notifies the pastor and immediately calls the archdiocesan Safe Environment Office (646-794-2807), which will direct the parish leadership through the situation according to archdiocesan policy.
- The Safe Environment Office or the Office of Legal Affairs will immediately notify law enforcement. The minor’s parent or guardian will be notified as well, unless the suspected abuse took place in the home, in which case Child Protective Services should be notified.
- If there is an emergency situation or an immediate threat or danger to the child, the coordinator of youth ministry or pastor must call the police immediately. They should not wait to speak to the Safe Environment Office before dialing 911. The first priority is to ensure the child’s safety.

COUNSELING, PROFESSIONAL REFERRALS AND DISCLOSURE

Counseling

When ministering to individuals who are encountering a time of crisis or difficulty, it is important to remem-