

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-