

Guidelines for Catechists & Volunteers & Chaperones

Holy Family and St. Robert Youth Ministry

It is presumed that all adults working with minors (therefore all Core Team members and all group leaders) have undergone sexual abuse awareness training and background checks. This involves the following three requirements:

- Safe Environment Education session sponsored through the Archdiocese of Milwaukee (register through www.archmil.org/events/default.asp)
- Passing the criminal background check (download form from www.strobert.org. Click on “Faith Formation” then “Youth Ministry.” Return the form to Mary Jorgensen at St. Robert Parish.
- Reading the Code of Ethics from the Archdiocese of Milwaukee and turn in the completed form indicating that you have read the Code of Ethics. (Download these documents from www.strobert.org, then “Faith Formation” then “Youth Ministry.”) Return the completed form to Mary Jorgensen at St. Robert.

Never be alone with a minor. Ask another adult to be present or be visible in a public place with doors open. If the young person wishes to confide in you personally and would like to have the door closed, do so only if there is another adult present. You may simply state that the parish has a policy that the door needs to stay open.

If you as an adult have a suspicion that a young person has recently been or is being physically or sexually abused, is abusing an illegal substance, or is suicidal, you *must* inform Ben Wolf or Claire Anderson *immediately* about your suspicions. Church leaders are mandatory reporters of physical or sexual abuse. For the safety of all our young people, contacting Ben Wolf or Claire Anderson immediately regarding any unhealthy behavior (cutting, alcohol use for those under 21, suspicions of abuse, etc.) is also our policy. Cell phone numbers are listed below. If a minor asks you to keep something confidential, explain that you will unless it is something that you legally must report (physical or sexual abuse) or you in good conscience for the benefit of the young person should report (suicidal tendencies or substance abuse). If there is a touchy subject, you may discuss it with me, keeping the name of the individual private if you wish. *Never* promise to remain quiet about something because there are some things you are required to report. Call 911 if there is an emergency. If a young person discloses to you plans to commit suicide and has a plan, don't allow the person out of your presence until authoritative help arrives.

Know alternate numbers and important information about the members of your group. During regular LifeTeen and Confirmation sessions, Ben Wolf has access to registration forms. Most of these forms have an alternate phone number. On trips, signed permission slips must be brought in the same vehicle as the student participant. (Driver forms may be kept in the parish office.) In the case of an emergency, call 911 and Ben or Claire immediately after. Either Ben or Claire or you as a group leader will call the parent or emergency phone number listed on the permission slip, depending on the situation. Often it pays to ask casually the young people you're responsible for if they have any allergies (such as bee stings or dairy products) to break the ice and to let them know that they are in good hands. If it seems appropriate, you may wish to ask the teenagers if their parent(s) is/are home (at the time of the trip... “this evening” or “this weekend,” for example).

Become acquainted with the exits and phones in every building you are in, whether at St. Robert or off campus on a trip. If you will be in that building for an extended period of time, find out the phone number for the nearest phone.

Do not leave any minor unsupervised if s/he is in the care of the parish. Remain visible to the teens and have them visible to you as much as possible. Check in on them often if it is not possible to be in the same area. Never leave a student alone to be picked up by a parent or other responsible adult. Stay at the site until every minor has been picked up by the parent or someone designated by the parent.

Intervene in situations in which there may be a potential use of violence as safely as you can for as many as possible. If a young person has in his/her possession an illegal substance or weapon (used as a weapon), call 911. Call the parent immediately to have the person(s) removed. Call Ben or Claire immediately.

Do not visit a minor at his/her house or pick up a minor from his/her house unless you have spoken personally with a parent beforehand and have been given permission. Otherwise, you are invited to call the young people in your small group or send them a note to build community or to give him/her encouragement throughout the year. Addresses and phone numbers are provided for each adult volunteer who have minors in his/her care.

Important Phone Numbers:

Ben Wolf, Youth Minister: (920) 918-4078 (cell)

Claire Anderson, Pastoral Associate: (414) 217-3067 (cell)

St. Robert Main Number: (414) 332-1164