

Protecting Our Children: Our Common Commitment

SEP education video for employees and volunteers (Revised 2007)

When to use

- As orientation/initial education of new personnel
 - The presentation of the video should be followed by personal discussion about the particular way the parish implements the SEP. Provide a copy of the summary of the mandated reporting law, Code of Conduct and Summary of the Guidelines.
- As a tool for recurring training (especially in 2007-2008)
 - The presentation should include a review of recent experience in the parish and any changes that have been made in the parish plan. It should also allow for questions and discussion of difficulties the personnel may have faced in trying to follow the SEP, especially the mandated reporting law.

How to use

- Establish a comfortable, private place.
- Be sure the individual(s) have copies of the summary of the mandated reporting law, Summary of the Guidelines and Code of Conduct.
- Present the video.
- Engage the individual(s) in conversation as noted above.
- End the session with signing of the Attestation.
- File the Attestation, record the session in the educational log and update the personnel spreadsheet.

Key points in the discussion

- When there is reasonable suspicion of child abuse, the individual must make a report directly to law enforcement (911) and CPS.
 - Reports to administration, locally and in the Pastoral Center follow that report.
 - It is permissible to consult with others to sort out a situation, in the interests of determining whether there is “reasonable suspicion” of child abuse.
 - On the other hand, no investigation should be started or any intervention undertaken prior to calling law enforcement whenever such reasonable suspicion is found to exist.
 - Teach personnel to think of law enforcement almost as a consultant in these matters so that when there is any doubt, there will be no hesitation to make the call and report.

- Discuss appropriate boundaries according to the Code of Conduct.
 - When there is concern about the behavior of another person that appears to violate the Code or prudent behavior but does not include reasonable suspicion of child abuse, the individual should report this concern to a person of authority in the parish.
 - Discuss the safeguards that are in place to protect the person who makes a good faith report.
 - Make clear the appropriate channels for making a concern known and steps that will be taken in response.
- Review the process of screening in the parish and the rationale that supports it.
 - Make clear the reason that criminal history checks are done on all employees and high responsibility volunteers.
 - Note that persons with a history of sexual misconduct with a minor cannot minister in the Diocese of Tucson. Make clear the distinction between this limitation and condemnation or shunning of the individual.
- Emphasize the importance of ongoing education regarding child abuse prevention. All persons in the parish can be part of the early detection and prevention of abuse.
- Review any SOPs applicable to the duties of the individual(s) present.

Handouts

- Mandatory Reporting Law of the State of Arizona (Spanish and English, available on the Resource Page)
- Code of Conduct and Summary Statement of the Guidelines (Spanish and English, available on the Resource Page)
- Attestation