



*Office of Counseling,
Prevention and Victim Services*

Diocese of Springfield, MA
65 Elliot St.
P. O. Box 1730
Springfield, MA, 01102-1730
Tel. (413) 452-0624
Fax. (413) 452-0618

GUIDELINES FOR OVERNIGHT I ACT RETREAT

Sponsored by:

Our Lady of the Valley Parish
33 Adams St.
Easthampton, MA 01027
(413) 527-9778

May 12-14, 2017

Camp Holy Cross, Goshen, MA
Onsite Contact: Justin Brown (413) 362-5064
Parish Child Advocate: Carol Growhoski

Section I: INTRODUCTION

A. Policy Summary

I'm A Christian Teen (I ACT) retreat team provides for a safe and nurturing environment for all who participate in its programs and follows the USCCB *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. The Diocese of Springfield prohibits all forms of sexual, physical and emotional abuse and sexual harassment as defined below in any activities sponsored by the Diocese. It is the intention and responsibility of the Diocese to take whatever action may be needed to prevent and correct behavior contrary to this policy. These actions include screening staff and volunteers, training staff and volunteers, setting guidelines for working with youth, and responding effectively to reports of abuse.

B. Definitions

1. Child Abuse

An abused child is one less than eighteen years of age whose parent or other person legally responsible for his or her care:

- Inflicts or allows to be inflicted serious physical injury to that child.
- Creates or allows to be created a substantial risk of serious physical injury.
- Commits or allows to be committed a sexual offense against the child including: rape, sodomy, forcible touching; patronizing, promoting or permitting prostitution; incest; and using a child in a sexual performance, such as promoting a sexual performance by a child in person, on video, on computer, or in a still photo.

2. Child Maltreatment (including Neglect)

Maltreatment means that a child's physical, mental, or emotional condition has been impaired, or placed in imminent danger of impairment, by the failure of the child's parent or other person legally responsible to exercise a minimum degree of care by:

- Failing to provide sufficient food, clothing, shelter, education.
- Failing to provide proper supervision, guardianship, or medical care.
- Inflicting excessive corporal punishment, abandoning the child, or misusing alcohol or other drugs to the extent that the child is placed in imminent danger.

Poverty or other financial inability to provide the above is not considered maltreatment.

3. Discipline:

Discipline must be administered in such a way as to help each child develop self-control and assume responsibility for his or her actions through clear and consistent rules and limits appropriate to the ages and development of the children in care. Adults in charge must use acceptable techniques and approaches to help children solve problems.

Any discipline used must relate to the child's action and be handled without prolonged delay on the part of the staff, so that the child is aware of the relationship between his or her actions and the consequences of those actions.

- Isolating a child in a closet, darkened area, or any area where the child cannot be seen and supervised by an adult is prohibited.
- Where a child's behavior harms or is likely to result in harm to the child, others, or property, or seriously disrupts or is likely to seriously disrupt group interaction, the child may be separated briefly from the group, but only for as long as is necessary for the child to regain enough self-control to rejoin the group. The child must be placed in an area where he or she is in the view of, and can be supervised and supported by an adult. Interaction between an adult and the child must take place immediately following the separation to guide the child toward appropriate group behavior.
- Corporal punishment is prohibited. Corporal punishment means punishment inflicted directly on the body including, but not limited to, spanking, biting, shaking, slapping, twisting or squeezing; demanding excessive physical exercise, prolonged lack of movement or motion, or strenuous or bizarre postures; and compelling a child to eat or have in the child's mouth soap, foods, hot spices, or other substances.
- Withholding or using food, rest, or sleep as a punishment is prohibited. Methods of discipline, interaction, or toilet training which frighten, demean, or humiliate a child are prohibited.
- I ACT retreat team will set forth rules and guidelines at the beginning of each retreat. It is expected that participants and volunteers follow these rules and guidelines. If any participant or volunteer is found in violation of these rules and guidelines they may be asked to leave the premises at their own expense or that of their parent/guardian. (For a copy of these rules please contact Justin Brown at IACTretreat@gmail.com or (413)362-5064.)

4. Sexual Harassment

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature are prohibited. This can include, but not be limited to:

- Rape, sexual battery, molestation, or attempts to commit these assaults.
- Intentional unwanted physical contact which is sexual in nature, such as pinching, patting, caressing, poking, grabbing, brushing against another person's body, or violating another person's space.

- Sexually oriented gestures, leering, noises, remarks, jokes, or comments directed at or made in the presence of any person.
- Use of sexually oriented material available on the Internet.

Section II – SAFE ENVIRONMENT SCREENING AND TRAINING

A. Screening process

1. All volunteers who work with minors, including volunteers not in leadership roles who assist with supporting the I ACT team will complete a 2017 CORI background check at least one month prior to the event.

- The I ACT Core team and Our Lady of the Valley Parish are responsible for ensuring and documenting that all mandated individuals have completed a background check.
- The Director of the Office of Counseling, Prevention and Victim Services and the director of the Diocesan Office of Human Resources will be responsible for screening these applicants.
- All volunteers who work with minors are subject to these restrictions:
 - An individual with a known conviction involving child abuse or violent crime will not be considered.
 - An individual who has any criminal history or history of child abuse which may impair his or her ability to effectively perform the functions of the position for which he or she is applying will not be considered.
- It is understood that the I ACT team does not transport children to or during youth events. Parents/guardians are responsible for providing transportation for their children.

B. Safe Environment training

1. The I ACT core team will be responsible for ensuring that all volunteers in leadership positions will complete a current Safe Environment training and sign a Code of Conduct.

- All clergy, employees, and volunteers who work with minors and are considered in leadership positions as determined by the I ACT core team will be trained by the Office of Counseling or approved alternate regarding their responsibility in preventing and reporting allegations of sexual, physical, and emotional/psychological abuse or sexual harassment. This training is renewed every three years and must have been completed or renewed since May 15, 2014.
- Training of employees and volunteers who work with minors will include the following:
 - Orientation to the facts about sexual, emotional and physical abuse, and sexual harassment.
 - Description of what to look for in order to prevent abuse.
 - Explanation of the Diocese Policy and the mandatory reporting procedures, How to respond to a youth reporting abuse (*See attached Handout Appendix B*)
 - Child abuse reporting fact sheet/obligations (*See attached Handout Appendix C*)

2. The I ACT core team will be responsible for training others not considered in leadership positions. This will consist of the following:

- understanding their roles regarding transporting and chaperoning youth
- review of the policy/guidelines
- Commitment to the Code of Conduct.

Section III: YOUTH PROGRAM GUIDELINES AND SUPERVISION

A. Settings and Supervision

1. Participants' programs will take place either in open areas, rooms with glass doors, or rooms with open doors, and never in remote or private spaces.

- 2017 I ACT Retreat takes place at Camp Holy Cross: 108 Cape St. Goshen, MA.
- During the retreat the participants are asked to be in a coed small group setting; each small group will be facilitated by at least two team members of opposite gender. (One of each gender)

2. The parents/guardians of all youth participating in the I ACT retreat must sign a permission slip and complete a medical form for their child. (Included in registration packet)

3. Two or more adults will be present at all presentations and large group activities to ensure the safety of all participants.

Adults will avoid placing themselves in compromising situations by being alone with a child out of sight of other adults. In the case when a private conversation must be had between an adult and participant it will happen in an open area in view of other adults.

4. All retreat participants will remain with the group throughout the weekend. Participants will not be permitted to separate from the group activity or from adult supervision, except in special situations. All participants are asked to use the buddy system while traveling on the camp grounds, (i.e., stepping away from an activity to use the bathroom, moving from presentation to presentation) All "buddies" will be of the same gender as to not isolate participants of the opposite gender

5. Participants sleep in cabins, 7 to a cabin. Boys and girls sleep in separate cabin units. Each Cabin unit consists of 4 Cabins contained within two buildings. All adult volunteers and participants over the age of 18 sleep in a cabin separate from younger participants. Team members (at least one male and one female) will remain awake working in shifts throughout the night and check in on participants as needed. The awake volunteers will be located centrally in the chapel building, when not actively checking the camp grounds, if any issues shall arise during the night.

6. Any and all activities planned for the waterfront on the Camp Holy Cross property will be overseen by a certified lifeguard and at least one other person certified in CPR/First Aid. Any and all water vessels that leave the shore will be occupied by participants of the same gender only and monitored by team members from a separate vessel.

7. I ACT team members will report any problems or concerns about potential child abuse to a member of the I ACT core team. If it is necessary to file a 51-A (see appendix D) report to the Department of Children and Families, the individual will report and document in writing all concerns to the designated member of the I Act core team. The report shall be provided to the Department of Children and Families, Our Lady of the Valley child advocates, and the Office of Counseling, Prevention and Victim Services within 48 hours.

The I ACT core team consists of:

Justin Brown
Kelly Brown
Dan Morse

Contact information will be provided for the core team upon request.

Our Volunteer team consists of:

Fifteen Adults (persons of at least 18 years age)
Five other Adults who will provide our food services throughout the weekend
A Certified Lifeguard for water activities
Five team members (not including our lifeguard) certified in First Aid/CPR
One team member Serv Safe certified to assist in meal preparation
The Co-Director of Camp Holy Cross

While on the property the team uses walkie talkies for means of quick communication. At least one radio will be in possession of a team member at each location when the retreat participants are split. Team members carry cell phones for the purpose of emergencies to contact local fire and police stations

The local fire and police departments will be aware of our presence on the property as well as Fr. Chris Malatesta at St Agnes Parish in Dalton who oversees the Camp Holy Cross Campgrounds.

A sole core team member will be in possession of all parental contact information in case of emergency.

If an emergency does occur and ambulance transportation is deemed necessary by local officials the closest hospital is Cooley Dickinson Hospital: 30 Locust St. Northampton, MA (413) 582-2000.

There will be designated times in which participants can use cell phones to call home if needed or a landline provided if necessary. Participants will be permitted to use cell phone in case of emergency.

It is our goal as the I ACT team to create and provide a comfortable and safe place for the youth of the Diocese of Springfield joining us on this retreat opportunity.

Goshen Police Department: 40 Main St. Goshen, MA (413)268-3116 or 911
Goshen Fire Department: 56 Main St. Goshen, MA (413)268-7161 or 911
Saint Agnes Parish: 489 Main St. Dalton, MA (413)684-0125
Camp Holy Cross Campgrounds: 108 Cape St. Goshen, MA (Please contact onsite contact as phone rings through to St. Agnes in Dalton, MA)
Our Lady of the Valley Parish: 33 Adams St. Easthampton, MA (413)527-9778
On-Site Emergency Contact- Justin Brown (413)362-5064

Office of Child and Youth Protection

Safe Environment Training

Responding to Children's Disclosures of Abuse

Patti McManamy, LICSW

What is child abuse?

Child abuse is defined by law as harm or threatened harm to a child's health or safety by the person responsible for the child's health or welfare, including sexual abuse and sexual exploitation.

Physical Abuse: Non-accidental physical injury to a child under the age of 18.

Sexual Abuse: Sexual exploitation of a child or adolescent for the sexual gratification of another person.

Neglect: Failure by a caretaker, either deliberately, or through negligence, or inability to take those actions necessary to provide a child with minimally adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, supervision, emotional stability and growth, or other essential care; provided, however, that such inability is not due solely to inadequate economic resources or solely to the existence of a handicapping condition.

Emotional Injury: An impairment to or disorder of the intellectual or psychological capacity of a child, as evidenced by observable and substantial reduction in the child's ability to function within a normal range of performance and behavior. Extremely harsh, critical treatment of a child may cause emotional injury. This can include punishment and verbal assaults that may involve belittling, scapegoating and rejection.

Who is required to report child abuse?

State law requires every person, private citizen or professional who has reasonable cause to believe that a child under 18 is being abused or is in danger of being abused, must report the suspicion of abuse to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) or the police department. Failure to report suspected abuse is a crime legally and wrong morally. No person, regardless of his or her relationship with the child or family, is exempt from reporting suspected abuse. A person reporting in good faith is immune from both civil and criminal prosecution.

Reporting is not an accusation or a proven fact. It is a request for an investigation to gather facts and protect the child from harm. **You do not need to prove the abuse prior to reporting.**

Your role is not to be an investigator, therapist, or social worker. Do not try to probe or gain more information. Your primary responsibility is to report. Investigation and validation of child abuse reports are the responsibility of DCF and/or law enforcement officials.

A child or minor should never be made to repeat his/her disclosure to a colleague or supervisor so a suspicion can be confirmed and a report made. Multiple interviews before DCF or law enforcement can taint an investigation and possibly jeopardize the safety of the child.

If additional incidents of abuse occur or are suspected after the initial report has been made, another referral to DCF with additional concerns and information should be made.

How to Respond to a Child's Disclosure of Abuse

Children disclose abuse in a variety of ways. They may disclose through very direct and specific communication, but that is not usually the case. More often the child will disclose through indirect means such as: "Our neighbor wears funny underwear," or "My brother

bothers me at night.” The child may disguise the disclosure by talking about a friend or sibling, but is just as likely to be talking about her/himself.

If a child discloses during a Religious Education class and you do not have someone to cover the class while you talk to the child privately, acknowledge the disclosure and continue with the lesson after your acknowledgement. The disclosure should never be discussed in front of the other students. Make sure you do follow up with the child.

If your students keep a journal or log of their thoughts as part of a class, mention to the students if you will read these journals throughout the year. If you read any information that should be reported due to the content, you are obligated to report this information to DCF. If students are to keep journals but you will not be reading them, mention this as well, so that a student will not use this format to disclose possible abuse.

If a child/youth discloses to you:

Do--

- Listen to the child without interruption.
- Let him/her talk openly about the situation. You may say something such as, “I’m glad you told me that.” If you feel you need more information on the disclosure (such as if he/she says something like “My uncle touches me,”—you need to know a little more to be sure what the child means), only ask an open-ended question, such as, “Tell me more about that,” and when he/she does, acknowledge with an “Okay.” Do not ask any other questions of a specific nature.
- After this conversation, record in writing as accurately as you can what the child said. This will be important when you phone DCF.
- Support the child with active listening.
- Keep your own feelings under control.
- Use the child’s own vocabulary.
- Tell the child that there is help available.
- Be supportive.
- Reassure the child that you will do your best to support him/her.
- Seek out your own support person(s) to help you work through your emotional feelings about the disclosure (if needed), keeping in mind the confidential nature of the information you may be sharing. Share your feelings, not identifying information about the child.

Do NOT--

- Suggest answers to the child.
- Express panic or shock.
- If the child asks you not to tell anyone about what he/she just disclosed to you, do not promise confidentiality. As you know, you are required by state law to call DCF.
- Probe for more information.
- Try to determine for yourself if the allegation is valid.
- Correct or criticize the child's choice of words or language.
- Ask a lot of questions.
- Conduct an investigation.
- Call the child's parents.
- Convey anger or impatience if the child is not ready to discuss the abuse.
- Make negative comments about the perpetrator.
- Stand over a child while he/she is disclosing abuse.
- Suggest to a child that you think he/she may have been abused.
- Discuss this report with anyone other than DCF and your immediate supervisor.

Suggested response to disclosure: "Thank you for sharing that with me."

Child Abuse Reporting Fact Sheet

1. What is a mandated reporter?

A mandated reporter is someone who is legally obliged to report incidences of suspected child abuse/neglect.

2. Who is a mandated reporter?

Medical practitioners, public and private school teachers and administrators, guidance counselors, psychologists, social workers, daycare workers, foster parents, public safety officers—and others. Effective May 2002, **clergy and those who work** for religious institutions are also mandated reporters.

*The Diocese of Springfield's "Policy on the Protection of Children" has deemed that those who **volunteer for the Church**, while not legally mandated, are obligated to report suspected abuse.

3. What about child abuse revealed during Confession?

The "Confessional Exception" is narrow. State law says "Clergy shall report all cases of abuse unless the information derives solely from the confessional (or similar confidential communication in other religions)."

4. Am I obligated to report suspected abuse at all times?

No. You must report when you are in your role as a staff/volunteer for the Church.

Of course, a person can always call the Dept. of Children and Families (DCF) when there is concern about suspected abuse.

5. How are abuse and neglect defined?

Abuse: the non-accidental commission of any act against a child that causes or creates a substantial risk of physical injury.

Neglect: the failure of the caregiver to provide minimally adequate care in these areas: food, shelter, clothing, medical care, supervision, emotional stability, or other essential care.

Sexual Abuse: any sexual contact between a child and a caretaker. This includes involvement with pornography.

6. Under what circumstances must a mandated reporter or a volunteer within the Diocese make a report to the Dept. of Children and Families (DCF)?

Whenever the reporter has "reasonable cause to believe" that a child under 18 is being abused or neglected.

You can always call DCF to consult. They will advise you regarding whether a report is necessary or not.

7. How is suspected child abuse/neglect reported?

During business hours, call the appropriate office:

Springfield, 413-452-3200

Holyoke, 413-493-2600

(or 1-800-698-3935)

Northampton, 413-584-1698

(or 1-800-841-2692)

Greenfield, 413-775-5000

(or 1-800-842-5905)

Pittsfield, 413-236-1800

(or 1-800-292-5022)

After hours, call **1-800-792-5200**

8. What if I am not sure if a child is being abused?

When in doubt – make a report.

Absolute proof is not needed. “Reasonable cause to believe” covers anything that creates reasonable suspicion that a child is being abused.

9. Will the name of the reporter be revealed?

Legally mandated reporters must give their name to DCF, but DCF regulations prohibit the release of a reporter’s name to others. However, if the crime is of a sufficiently serious nature to warrant a referral to the District Attorney’s office, the DA will receive the name of the mandated reporter.

A person making a voluntary report--such as a church volunteer--may do so anonymously.

10. Under what circumstances do DCF and the District Attorney collaborate during the DCF investigation?

When investigating the most serious allegations of sexual and physical abuse, DCF, the DA, and the police work together to conduct forensic interviews. Also, if a case does not involve a “caretaker,” DCF may refer the matter to the DA’s office.

11. Can the reporter delegate the reporting to a superior?

No. The Diocese of Springfield’s policy is that the person who obtains the information is the one who calls DCF.

12. Must a Church staff or volunteer tell the DRE or Pastor that he/she is filing a report?

No. The staff or volunteer may review the situation with a superior if he/she wants, but there is no obligation to tell a superior.

13. Can a reporter be civilly or criminally liable for filing a report with DCF?

To encourage reporters to file, MA law protects reporters from civil and criminal liability for making a report to DCF.

14. If I suspect child abuse, do I contact DCF or the Diocese of Springfield Review Board first?

Call DCF first.

15. What is the role of the Review Board?

The Review Board is an independent board that hears complaints regarding sexual misconduct on the part of a Diocesan employee or volunteer. If you would like to make a report to the Review Board, the number is **1-800-842-9055**.

16. Where can I get more information about child abuse reporting?

During business hours, call the appropriate office:

Springfield, 413-452-3200

Holyoke, 413-493-2600

(or 1-800-698-3935)

Northampton, 413-584-1698

(or 1-800-841-2692)

Greenfield, 413-775-5000

(or 1-800-842-5905)

Pittsfield, 413-236-1800

(or 1-800-292-5022)

After hours, call **1-800-792-5200**

The Department of Social Services web site contains a wealth of valuable information:

<http://www.mass.gov/dcf>.

Fact Sheet prepared by:

Diocese of Springfield

Office of Counseling, Prevention and Victim Services

413-452-0624