



# Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana

The Mission of the Catholic People of North Central Indiana

## **BEST PRACTICES REGARDING MINORS**

### **General Information**

A minor is a person who has not yet reached his/her 18th (eighteenth) birthday and must be viewed, whether in a social or ministerial situation, as a “restricted individual”.

Minors are not independent when participating in youth activities directed by the parish or diocese. Wherever they are and whatever they do is to be with the explicit knowledge of the parent(s) or guardian(s), respecting the boundaries that are explained in these Best Practices and expected between an adult and a minor.

Minors are subject to specific Civil Laws in their own proper state and city which may prohibit certain activities. They are not adults and are not permitted unfettered decisions.

### **Ministry to Minors**

- Reflect on the words of Christ (Matthew 18:6; Mark 9:42; Luke 17:2; Mark 10:13-16)
- Every adult who is employed by the Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana or who volunteers in the Diocese must complete all required Safe Environment Protocol and submit a Background Check through the Diocesan online training program - [Safe & Sacred](#)
- Professional attitudes and relationships are observed with minors at all times.
- Two or more adults must be present in all situations involving minors.
- Adults are not alone with a minor in a home; a closed room; one-on-one games or sports; a locker room or any other dressing area or a vehicle.
- Boundaries are respected in interactions with minors: unwarranted physical contact is never appropriate; adults avoid the trap of “parent figure” or being a “buddy” to a minor; adults are aware of the influence they have.
- Comments of a sexual nature are only made in response to a specific question and are professionally worded.
- Topics/vocabulary not used in the presence of parents are not used with minors at any time.
- Adults are not: To supply/serve alcohol or controlled substance; to consume/use/ alcohol or controlled substances.
- Pastoral Counseling should only be conducted by an ordained minister, a licensed religious social worker or a trained pastoral counselor.

### **Communications with Minors**

With the explosion of technology use among minors as well as adults, the following guidelines serve to clarify safe measures in

communications between any adult having contact with minors within our Diocese and between minors and youth ministers and teachers.

Communication with minors must always be public, transparent and never in a form that could be construed or viewed as secretive or private

- Parents or Legal Guardians must be informed of the different electronic methods to be utilized for communication purposes with minors by employees and volunteers of the church organization.
- All communications should be minimal and only used to exchange needed information. Parents should be copied on all messages, and all messages should be Church/organization related.
- Adults should maintain separate social networking accounts for professional/church organizations and personal communications.
- Avoid any communication which might be construed as having sexual overtones.

DO NOT REPLY to any such messaging received from minors; instead make and keep a copy of any such inappropriate communication and notify an administrator/Pastor or supervisor immediately. Refer to *Social Networking / Technology Directives at [www.dol-in.org](http://www.dol-in.org)*.

## **Overnight Youth Events**

- All chaperones/drivers **must** complete all required Safe Environment Protocol and submit a Background Check through the Diocesan online training program - [Safe & Sacred](#) prior to the event. At least two adult chaperones/drivers **must** be present at all times.
- All appropriate forms **must** be completed and submitted to the lead staff person.
- One copy of the appropriate forms should travel with the lead staff member and a copy should stay in the parish /school office.
- The ratio between chaperones to youth should be age appropriate. A younger age necessitates a higher ratio of adults to children.
- If the participants in the event are male and female, chaperones of both sexes **must** be present.
- Adults should consider themselves working during the entire event.
- When staying in a hotel, youth should be paired up with an “age appropriate buddy”. Chaperones must be informed of the youth’s whereabouts at all times.
- Youth and young adults under the age of 25 should not transport other youth in a vehicle during any Church/School related/sponsored event.
- Youth should be assigned rooms according to the same gender. Youth cannot be present in rooms assigned to the opposite gender.
- Parents should be notified immediately if an unplanned stop occurs.
- Event should include one adult, CPR Certified staff member.
- One Staff member will be responsible for the dispersal of prescribed medications.

## **Mission Statement**

Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana

We are the people of God uniting in the heart of Jesus Christ. We join the whole Church in proclaiming the Gospel in Word, Sacrament and Charity for the Salvation of all people.

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ORIGINAL (JANUARY 2000) BY THE OFFICE OF SAFE  
ENVIRONMENT  
(HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT)  
IN COLLABORATION WITH THE  
PASTORAL OFFICES FOR EDUCATION,  
YOUTH AND CATECHESIS