

**Archdiocese of Cincinnati**

**Decree on  
Child  
Protection**

**Summary Brochure**

**EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2013**

**Introduction**

Although the abuse of children and adolescents is a reality in our society, such abuse, whether physical, sexual, verbal or emotional, whether inflicted by lay or ordained, professionals or volunteers, cannot be tolerated in the Church.

**Purpose**

The purpose of the *Decree on Child Protection* is two-fold: to prevent the abuse of children and adolescents and to provide a system for handling incidents of abuse after they occur.

*This is only a summary of the Decree on Child Protection. The complete document is available by calling the Chancellor's Office at (513) 421-3131, or online at [www.CatholicCincinnati.org](http://www.CatholicCincinnati.org).*



## NOTES

# What is Child Abuse?

## Child Abuse

Any of the following:

- Engaging in sexual activity, as defined under Chapter 2907 of the *Ohio Revised Code*, with a child where such activity would constitute an offense under that Chapter;
- Endangering a child as defined in Section 2919.22 of the *Ohio Revised Code*;
- Denying to a child, as a means of punishment, proper or necessary subsistence, education, medical care or other care necessary to a child for the child's health;
- Using restraint that causes a child pain or injury;
- Administering prescription drugs or psychotropic medication to a child without the written approval and ongoing supervision of a licensed physician;
- Providing alcoholic beverages or controlled substances to a child. For the purpose of this *Decree on Child Protection*, this does not include the offering of the Precious Blood to someone under the age of 21 within the context of an official Church function;
- Committing of any act, other than by accidental means or by actions taken in self-defense or under similar justifiable circumstances, that results in any injury or death to a child or commission of any act by accidental means that results in any injury or death to a child and that is at variance with the history given of the injury or death;
- Inflicting by any individual of physical or mental injury that threatens to harm a child's health or welfare.

## **Types of Child Abuse**

**Physical abuse** is any non-accidental physical injury to a child caused by an adult which results in or threatens serious injury. Often adults who physically abuse children do not intend to seriously injure the children but get carried away by anger and frustration in their own lives.

### **Signs of physical abuse include:**

- A child has unexplained burns, bruises, broken bones, black eyes.
- A child has fading bruises after an absence from class or regularly scheduled activity.
- Unusual shyness, wariness of physical contact.
- A child reports injury from adult.

**Sexual abuse** is any sexual activity upon or with a child. The act may be for the sexual gratification of the perpetrator or a third party. Other terms for sexual abuse include child molestation, incest (if the abuser is a member of the child's family) or child pornography. Often the child knows the abuser.

### **Signs of sexual abuse include:**

- A child exhibits change in behavior such as loss of appetite, nightmares, inability to sleep or withdrawal from usual activities and peer relationships.
- A child returns to bedwetting or thumb sucking.
- A child has genital pain, itching, swelling or bleeding.
- A child indicates fear of a person or an intense dislike of being left somewhere or with a particular person.
- A child shows unusual interest in or knowledge of sexual matters, expressing affection in ways inappropriate for a child of his or her age.

**Neglect** is the failure of a parent or guardian to provide a child with adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, education or supervision. Neglect is a chronic problem often resulting, not from poverty, but from lack of knowledge as to the proper care required by children.

### **Signs of neglect include:**

- A child is frequently absent.
- A child begs or steals food or money.
- A child lacks medical or dental care, glasses (if needed) and immunizations.
- A child lacks sufficient clothing.
- A child is consistently dirty and has severe body odor/poor hygiene.
- A child abuses alcohol or drugs.
- A child states that no one provides care.
- A child assuming adult responsibilities.

**Emotional abuse** is an important factor in all forms of child abuse. To be hurt so much by someone who should care and protect is very damaging to the emotional development of a child. Adults who do not physically harm a child may cause emotional harm by using words that threaten, harshly criticize, ridicule or harass.

### **Signs of emotional abuse include:**

- A child shows extremes in behavior.
- A child is either inappropriately adult or infantile.
- A child is delayed in physical or emotional development.
- A child has attempted suicide.
- A child reports lack of attachment to parents.
- A child is exhibiting extremes of behavior, overly anxious to please, to assume blame or extremely passive or aggressive, demanding or undemanding.

## **Behavior Expectations**

These are behavior expectations of adults who are priests, deacons, auxiliary services personnel, personnel furnished by a third party contractor, employees and volunteers of the Archdiocese and its subdivisions.

**Prohibited physical contact:** Some forms of physical contact have been used by adults to initiate inappropriate contact with children. In order to maintain the safest possible environment for children, the following are examples of physical contact

prohibited from use by priests, deacons, auxiliary services personnel, personnel furnished by third party contractors, employees and all volunteers:

- Any form of unwanted affection;
- Inappropriate, forceful or lengthy embraces, and/or “bear hugs;”
- Kisses;
- Lap-sitting;
- Touching buttocks, chest, knees, thighs or genital areas;
- Placing hands in the pockets of a child;
- Showing affection in isolated areas such as bedrooms, closets, adult-only or staff-only areas or other private rooms;
- Laying down, cuddling or sleeping near a child;
- Being in bed with a child;
- Wrestling;
- Tickling;
- Piggyback rides;
- Massage given by an adult to a child;
- Massage given by a child to an adult;
- Stroking a child’s hair or shoulders.

**Prohibited behaviors:** In addition, priests, deacons, auxiliary services personnel, personnel furnished by third party contractors, employees and all volunteers are prohibited from the following:

- Using, possessing or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs while working with children;
- Offering a child cigarettes, other smoking materials or tobacco products, alcohol or illegal drugs or allowing a child to use or consume these items;
- Allowing a child to visit inappropriate internet websites;
- Providing a child with gifts/money without the permission of parents or guardians unless when distributed equitably to all children (for example, buying inexpensive gifts for all the altar servers);
- Ridiculing beliefs held by a child’s parents or guardians;
- Asking a child to keep secrets from the child’s parents or guardians;
- Speaking to a child in a way that is or could be construed by any observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning or humiliating;

- Using bad language, swearing and/or cursing in the presence of a child;
- Behaving rudely in the presence of a child;
- Possessing any sexually-oriented or morally inappropriate materials (e.g. magazines, cards, videos, films, DVDs, clothing, etc.) in the presence of a child;
- Engaging in, viewing/listening to child pornography, possessing child pornography on any personal electronic device, or on any electronic device owned by a parish, school, agency, or institution of the Archdiocese;
- Being nude in the presence of a child;
- Engaging in sexual contact with a child. Sexual contact is defined as vaginal intercourse, anal intercourse, oral intercourse or the touching of any erogenous zone of another (including, but not limited to the thighs, genitals, buttocks, pubic region or chest) for the purposes of sexually arousing or gratifying either person.

**Emotional boundaries:** In addition to physical boundaries that must be set, emotional boundaries must be created between children and priests, deacons, auxiliary services personnel, personnel furnished by third party contractors, employees and all volunteers. Examples of emotional boundary violations include:

- Compliments that relate to physique or body development;
- Meeting alone in locations away from a parish, school, agency or institution;
- Meeting alone in remote locations on parish, school, agency or institution property;
- Calling, e-mailing, or texting a child for purposes other than those directly related to academics or ministry;
- Displaying and/or taking excessive photographs of a child;
- Engaging in sexually oriented conversations not related to education or ministry;
- Contacting by social media, (e.g. Facebook, etc.)

**Matters related to transporting children:** If it becomes necessary for any priest, deacon, auxiliary services personnel, personnel furnished by a third party contractor, employee or volunteer to provide transportation for children, the following guidelines must be strictly observed:

- Priests, deacons, auxiliary services personnel, personnel furnished by a third party contractor, employees or volunteers must **never transport one child alone**. There should be at least two adults in every vehicle that transports children. In exceptional situations, it may be permitted for one adult to transport children in a vehicle, provided a caravan of vehicles goes directly from point A to point B, with no stops in between;
- When traveling in a caravan there must be a minimum of one adult in every vehicle. If a vehicle is traveling alone, there must be at least two adults in the vehicle;
- Children must be directly transported to their destination, or make only previously planned stops (e.g. stopping for food or gas on a long trip). If an emergency stop must be made, all reasonable efforts must be made to ensure that two adults are present (e.g. calling another car in the caravan to pull over as well);
- Children must never be transported without written permission from the child's parent or guardian;
- Clerics, auxiliary services personnel, personnel furnished by a third party contractor, employees or any volunteers must avoid unnecessary physical contact with children while in the vehicle.

## **Policies Aimed at Preventing Child Abuse**

- Except when civil law explicitly permits certain persons (for example, licensed social workers) to counsel children without parental consent, a child may receive scheduled, individual instruction or counseling from a cleric, employee or regular volunteer only with the written consent of the child's parent or guardian.
- A child may participate in an organized program sponsored by a parish, school, agency or institution of the Archdiocese only with the written consent of the child's parent or guardian on a standard *Permission, Release and Medical Power of Attorney* form (available on line at the Archdiocese web site at: [www.catholiccincinnati.org](http://www.catholiccincinnati.org)). Such written consent should provide for emergency care of the child, as warranted by the program or activity.
- For any activity sponsored by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, at least two adults, both of whom have successfully completed a

VIRTUS® Child Awareness Session and background check through fingerprinting or otherwise in a manner approved by the Chancellor in accord with the current policies of the Archdiocese, and who are not related to each other, must be present for any activity, including but not limited to e.g. after school tutoring of any sort (whether the tutor is hired by the parents or not).

a) Moreover, the number and gender of the adults are to be in proportion to the age, number and gender of the participants, and the duration and difficulty of the activity. Prudence is required in applying this policy to different age groups, length of activity and the risk level of the activity. (i) A ratio of 1:10 is recommended; (ii) Whenever there is a mixed group of boys and girls it is preferred that one adult of each gender is present. The proportion of male / female chaperones should be similar to the proportion of the children; (iii) Single sex athletics must have at least one adult of the same gender as the players (e.g., in case of injury or illness requiring attention in a rest room).

b) Whenever possible, one of the adults should be a parent or guardian of a participant.

c) Exceptions for this C.3 policy are only allowed for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, regular day-school or religion classes conducted on the grounds of the parish, school, agency or institution, and if for unanticipated reasons, only one adult can actually be present for an activity which is not overnight.

d) For purposes of this C.3 Policy, "adult" excludes 18 and 19 year olds not yet graduated from high school and others who have graduated from high school but who wish to attend activities with members of their high school class during the three months following their graduation with others who are less than 18 years of age.

- No child may be disciplined corporally or corrected with abusive language.
- A cleric, employee or regular volunteer must obtain the consent of the child's parent or guardian before inviting or allowing a child to visit in the adult's home. If the adult has little or no advance notice of the visit, and another adult is present, such consent is not required.
- Clerics, employees and regular volunteers will use prudence when communicating with a child, including, but not limited to, written communications, the Internet, online services, e-mails,

instant messaging, online bulletin boards, social networking sites, text messaging, pod casts, blogs, chat areas and telephones, including cell phones. Appropriate and ethical communication boundaries in ministry must always be observed. Any form of communication that is intended to inappropriately manipulate a child or that incorporates any suggestive language, suggestive photos, sexual innuendos, inappropriate personal self-disclosures, etc., is forbidden.

## **Proper Response to Actual or Suspected Child Abuse**

### **Reporting to Civil Authorities**

The Archdiocese will comply with all applicable civil laws with respect to reporting allegations of known or suspected abuse of children, or use or possession of child pornography to Civil Authorities. Ohio law requires all persons acting in an official or professional capacity to immediately report any actual or suspected act of child abuse to the public children's service agency or to a municipal or county peace officer in the county where the child resides or where the abuse or neglect is occurring.

The Archdiocese encourages all persons to immediately report any actual or suspected acts of child abuse to Civil Authorities.

An allegation of child abuse which is made by someone who chooses to remain anonymous must be reported to the Civil Authorities in the same way as an allegation made by someone who chooses not to remain anonymous.

### **Signs of abuse or neglect**

If you observe that a child is exhibiting any one of the signs of child abuse or neglect, be aware that the presence of any one of the signs does not confirm abuse or neglect. However, the presence of these signs is reason to discuss concerns or observations with the staff person to whom the volunteer or employee is responsible.

## **Acts of abuse perpetrated by a cleric, employee or volunteer of the Archdiocese**

Any cleric, employee or regular volunteer, whether obligated by state law to report to the Civil Authorities or not, who witnesses an act of child abuse perpetrated by another cleric, employee or volunteer or suspects that such an act has occurred or receives a report of such an act, must immediately report the incident to the Chancellor at (513) 421-3131.

Other persons who know or suspect that a child has been abused by an agent of the Archdiocese are encouraged to report the incident to the Chancellor at (513) 421-3131.

### **Potentially abusive behavior**

Any cleric, employee or regular volunteer who observes another cleric, employee or volunteer behaving in a manner which may pose a potential risk to a child is to report the matter in confidence to the proper superior or supervisor without delay.

## **Who is a Regular Volunteer?**

For purposes of this *Decree*, a “regular volunteer” is an adult who is not a cleric or employee (for example, a catechist, scout leader, coach, server coordinator, etc.) who functions in a regular relationship having contact with children. This includes interns, student teachers and others in similar capacities.

For example, a regular volunteer is one who has contact with children:

- on any overnight event;
- on at least a monthly basis; or
- in a multi-day program (e.g. Vacation Bible School).

A regular volunteer has contact with children at least once a month, or participates in any overnight event with children. It does not include the occasional volunteer such as a driver or chaperone whose contact with children is less than one hour per month for activities that are not overnight.

**Contact Numbers to  
Report Allegations of Child Abuse  
Resources: County Children’s Protective Services**

Adams County	Children’s Services	937.544.2511
Auglaize County	Dept. of Job and Family Services	419.739.6505
	Sheriff’s Office (After Hours)	419.739.6565
Brown County	Dept. of Jobs and Family Services	937.378.6104
	Sheriff’s Office (After Hours)	937.378.4435
Butler County	Children’s Services	513.887.4055
Champaign County	Job and Family Services	937.484.1500
Clark County	Family and Children Services (intake)	937.327.1748
	(After Hours)	937.324.8687
Clermont County	Children’s Protective Services and Adult	513.732.7173
	(After Hours-Dispatch)	513.732.2231
Clinton County	Child Protection Unit	937.382.5935
	(After Hours)	937.382.2449
Darke County	Job and Family Services	937.548.4132
	Sheriff’s Office (After Hours)	937.548.2020
Greene County	Children’s Services	937.562.6600
	(After Hours)	937.879.4357
	From Fairborn	937.878.1415
	(After Hours)	937.372.4357
Hamilton County	Children’s Protective Services (Hotline)	513.241.KIDS (513.241.5437)
Highland County	Children’s Services Agency	937.393.3111
	Sheriff’s Office (After Hours)	937.393.1421
Logan County	Children’s Services	937.599.7290
Mercer County	Dept. of Job and Family Services	419.586.5106
	Sheriff’s Office (After Hours)	419.586.7724
Miami County	Children’s Services	937.335.4103
	(After Hours-Goes to 911 Center)	937.440.9911
Montgomery County	Children Services Division	937.224.5437
Preble County	Dept. of Job and Family Services	937.456.1135
Shelby County	Dept. of Job and Family Services	937.498.4981
	Sheriff’s Office (After Hours)	937.498.1111
Warren County	Children Services	513.695.1546
	(After Hours)	513.695.1600

**If the number is not listed as a HOTLINE,  
ask for the Children’s Intake Worker before beginning the report.**