

ST. MARY OF GOSTYN PARISH

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION



2026-2027

FAMILY HANDBOOK

1st grade - Confirmation

445 Prairie Avenue

Downers Grove, IL 60515

630-960-3566

religiouseducation@stmarygostyn.org

www.stmarygostyn.org

ABSENCE CALL IN LINE 630-960-3566

ST. MARY OF GOSTYN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

FAMILY HANDBOOK

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Diocese of Joliet

The diocese of Joliet requires all parishes to provide the following information to program parents. Please become familiar with these documents.

• DOJ Policy Regarding Sexual Abuse of Minors ^S revised 2013	pages 8-14
• DOJ Standards of behavior to Safeguard Against Child Abuse ^{rv2014}	pages 15-17
• DOJ Parent Guide to Understanding Child Sexual Abuse	pages 18-19
• DOJ Parent Guide to Internet Safety for Children and Teens	pages 20-21

ST. MARY OF GOSTYN CATHOLIC PARISH

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN

2026-2027 RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLERGY AND STAFF

Pastor	Rev. Shaun Cieslik
Parochial Vicar (Religious Education Chaplin)	Rev. Christopher Oyoo Otieno
Deacons	Deacon Al Agurkis Deacon Thomas Jagielo Deacon Bob Miciunas
Director of Religious Education	Jen Liszka 630-960-3566 jliszka@stmarygostyn.org
Absence/Late Arrival Call In	630-960-3566

TUITION AND FEES

One Child Family Tuition	\$275
Two Children Family Tuition	\$375
Three + Children Family Tuition	\$425

In **addition** to the Family Tuition, Sacramental Fees are charged per child for Sacrament years
 First Reconciliation/First Holy Communion \$60 fee per child
 Confirmation—8th grade only \$60 fee per child

**ALL FAMILY TUITION AND FEES ARE DUE TO ST. MARY OF GOSTYN BY
 OCTOBER 11, 2026**

VOLUNTEER TUITION

Any valuable program requires the work of many volunteers, including catechists who accomplish a variety of tasks. **Volunteers who come forward at the time of registration** are offered a discounted tuition. All Sacramental Fees remain the same.

One Child Catechist Family	\$100	One Child Hall Monitor Family	\$225
Two Children Catechist Family	\$100	Two Children Hall Monitor Family	\$325
Three + Children Catechist Family	\$100	Three + Children Hall Monitor Family	\$375

**ALL VOLUNTEER TUITION AND FEES ARE DUE TO ST. MARY OF GOSTYN BY
 OCTOBER 11, 2026**

Volunteer tuition is not guaranteed and is only available to parents/legal guardians of enrolled students. Catechist tuition is subject to our program needs, based on available positions, available session times and available grade levels. In the event a volunteer's available time and/or talent does not meet the program needs, tuition will be adjusted and billed accordingly. All volunteers must be adults (18 and over) with Protecting God's Children guidelines met.

FINANCIAL HARDSHIP

If a family is experiencing financial hardship, please call the Religious Education office at 630-960-3566. Help is available to any family requesting application forms for a Payment Plan Schedule or Financial Help from St. Mary of Gostyn Parish.

ST. MARY OF GOSTYN CATHOLIC PARISH

PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN

The philosophy of religious education underlying the activities of the Religious Education Office of St. Mary of Gostyn Church is based on two key principles:

1. Religious Education is a continuing process which strives to develop in each Catholic Christian a mature and enlightened faith.
2. Religious Education has a fourfold mission; to teach the message of Jesus, to build community, to celebrate faith life, and to be of service to others.

The Catholic Church teaches us that parents have the primary responsibility for the formation of their children. Therefore, our children's program is built on the premise that the best formation of children will come about through the spiritual growth of their parent(s) or guardian(s) and other teachers. We see our program as only the partner and supporter of the parent or guardian in carrying out the task of the religious education of their children.

St. Mary of Gostyn Religious Education Office seeks to meet the children where they are and draw them gradually, according to their own development, into a deeper understanding and experience of their own faith. We try to help our students to become "doers of the Word, and not hearers only." To bring this about we strive to weave religion lessons around some concrete experience which will help bring the lesson from the realm of theory into realm of the real.

OBJECTIVES

- I. To proclaim the MESSAGE of Christ Jesus.
 - A. To teach faithfully the principle elements of the Catholic Christian message for catechesis. "Christ Our Life" and "Finding God" is our curriculum published by Loyola Press, offers a spiral curriculum encompassing the following themes. Each grade level covers these teachings.
 1. God
 2. Jesus
 3. Creed
 4. Scripture
 5. Morality
 6. Sacraments
 7. Prayer
 8. Catholic Social Teaching
 - B. To assist the students in understanding and remembering the common prayer formulas of the Church, the ten commandments, the laws of the Church, and the Sacraments.
- II. To provide students with experiences of Catholic worship.
 - A. To celebrate together the principle events of the liturgical year.
 - B. To celebrate Mass together 2-3 times a year during RE sessions.
 - C. To promote participation in personal prayer and weekly communal worship.
- III. To foster Christian Community
 - A. To provide opportunities for students to share their faith.
 - B. To activate Christian concerns for issues of life, truth, and justice.

PROGRAM POLICIES

COMMUNICATION

Our main sources of communication to families is through email, the parish bulletin and the parish website (www.stmarygostyn.org). Some catechists will use the student folder as well. Families should be diligent in reading the email and the bulletin (available on line) as they will contain important information and dates.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parent(s) are expected to review what children have learned in catechetical sessions, work with them to learn assigned prayers to be mastered for their grade level, and assist with any assigned homework. Any prayers that are expected to be memorized are available in the textbook. Other expectations include weekly/holy day Mass attendance, and parish ministry participation.

SCHEDULE

Catechetical sessions will be held at St. Mary of Gostyn according to the following schedule:

- | | | |
|-------------|--------------|------------|
| • Wednesday | 4:30—5:35 pm | Grades 1-8 |
| • Wednesday | 6:30—7:35 pm | Grades 1-8 |
| • Thursday | 4:30—5:35 pm | Grades 1-8 |

REGISTRATION AND TUITION

All registration materials are available on line on the Parish website (www.stmarygostyn.org) under the **Religious Education** tab. Registration for families currently registered in the program is April 15th to June 25th, giving them first choice in reserving session assignments. Registration for all families of St. Mary of Gostyn parish opens July 1st. New families can obtain registration materials from the Religious Education Office or on the parish website. All children who are new **MUST** include a Baptism certificate with registration. Children who have been Baptized in another faith tradition, will need to complete a "Profession of Faith," to proceed. All tuition is to be paid in full by October 11, 2026, or as otherwise posted.

RECEPTION OF THE SACRAMENTS

The norm for reception of the Sacraments of Initiation are as follows:

- First Holy Communion - Grade 2. Children who have completed Grades 1 & 2 are eligible to receive the Sacrament for the first time in early May. First Reconciliation is received in January.
- Confirmation - Grade 8. Children who have completed Grades 7 & 8 are eligible to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation in late winter/early spring. These two years of preparation include specific paperwork, active participation in all sessions, and a Confirmation Retreat.
- Children who fall out of the norm will be inserted into a "Rite of Christian Initiation of Children." More information is available to families upon request. Session times for the "Rite of Christian Initiation of Children." will take place outside the regular RE classroom, and will likely take place around Sunday Mass time.

PROGRAM POLICIES

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

- Respect the authority of all adults, volunteers and staff of the Religious Education Program, St. Mary of Gostyn School and other parents and adults involved in our program
- Arrive at all sessions on time, always arrive with textbook and prepared for the 1 hour and 5 minute session time.
- Actively participate in all classroom activities while respecting fellow students by listening as well.
- Use of the classroom must be respected as the space is also used by St. Mary of Gostyn School. No defacing, borrowing, taking or moving of desks, student supplies and teacher supplies.

ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE

1. Children are expected to attend each and every class (except due to illness or other emergency). We strongly discourage regular early dismissal and late arrival. Session re-assignment is available depending on availability.
2. Inconsistent attendance - In the event that your student will be missing multiple classes please contact the Director at 630-960-3566 to discuss make up assignments.
3. A parent or guardian must call the Religious Education Office to report the absence of a child. **The number is 630-960-3566.**

CONTINUITY

It is expected that students will faithfully attend each grade level (1-8) as part of their religious formation. The norm is Grades 1-2 are required to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist and Grades 7-8 are required for the Sacrament of Confirmation. All other grades build on the Sacrament years and are an integral part of the development of a Catholic child.

CONDUCT

The time children have for formal catechesis is a precious commodity. Therefore, we request that parents make their children aware that good moral conduct and courteous behavior is expected toward their catechist and fellow students. Disrespect to classmates, catechists, or other adults involved in our program can not be tolerated. Students who disrupt, harass or violate the right of other students, staff or volunteers maybe be subject to disciplinary action.

The hallway is designated as a time out area. After an oral warning, children with discipline problems will be removed from a classroom and be supervised by a hall monitor. These children could be given an assignment related to the session. In the event of 3 consistent time outs, notification of the behavior will be given to the parent. No change in behavior will result in calling the parents for a meeting with the pastor or his designee. Parents may be requested to attend catechetical session if the behavior problem goes unresolved. If behavior does not change and/or the student continues to be disruptive, break classroom rules and/or harass or violate the rights of others in the program, the Director or pastor reserves the right to dismiss the student from the program.

Out of reverence for the House of God, food and beverages are **not** permitted in church. Water may be permitted when needed for a health-related concern.

PROGRAM POLICIES

STUDENT TEXTBOOKS

Each student receives a Religion textbook and folder to keep and use at class and at home. Parents or guardians should remind their child to bring the textbook and folder to class every session. It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to replace any lost books. Replacement books can be obtained through the Religious Education Office at 630-690-3566.

CELL PHONES, FIDGET TOYS AND OTHER ELECTRONICS

- Fidget toys are sometimes necessary for children with attention issues. If your child needs a fidget toy, please notify the Religious Education Office. Otherwise, no fidget toys should come to class.
- No cell phones or electronics are allowed during sessions, unless a class project is on-going. If so, the catechist may announce approval to use them. If students are found with such toys/devices it will be confiscated and returned at session end. After 3 confiscations, the phone will be given to the Director and the parents will have to come to the RE office to pick up the device.

DISCIPLESHIP JOURNALS FOR GR. 7 & 8

All students enrolled in Grades 7 & 8 are required to complete a Discipleship Journal. Grade 8 journal is due before Confirmation; Grade 7 is due April 22nd. Some activities will be announced via email, or parish bulletin, but families are expected to work together to accomplish the Holy Encounters and the Christian Service Projects. Always feel free to call the Religious Education Office for more information or questions. Journals for the next year will be distributed at the end of Grade 6 and 7.

HOME SCHOOLING

A home study program is available to families with extenuating circumstances. The program involves a series of lessons, homework and assessments. Participation requires registration, tuition, and is only available in Grades 3-6.

EMERGENCY CLOSING

In the event of severe weather we ask that you check the parish website for our status at www.stmarygostyn.org.

PARKING ETIQUETTE

The flow of traffic around the parish grounds can be dangerous to our children. Prairie, Douglas, Gierz, and Fairview are all busy public streets. As always, our first priority is to keep our children safe before and after sessions. Please help us insure their safety.

DROP OFF Children with Sessions in the school building (Gr. 1-8) can be dropped off in the Church Parking Lot off of Prairie St. It is important to park in the designated spots to let your child out. Children can then cross Prairie at the **crosswalk at the Stop Sign**. A crossing guard will be available. Please be aware of children in the lot. Students can be dropped off on Douglas St, but must enter through the main doors.

PICK UP We ask that whenever possible, adults come to the school to pick up your children. You can wait in the front hallway or outside. If you must stay with your vehicle, please park in a designated parking space and wait for your child to be crossed with a crossing guard. Remember it will be dark for a good part of our sessions. Out of courtesy for our volunteers please arrive early for pick up.

WALKERS AND BIKE RIDERS If you live nearby and desire your child to walk or ride his/her bike home from church, please fill out the Walkers Permission Slip on the website.

DIOCESE OF JOLIET

POLICY REGARDING SEXUAL ABUSE OF MINORS

Revised February 2013

I. INTRODUCTION

On June 14, 2002, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops approved the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. On December 8, 2002, the *Essential Norms for Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors* were approved by Pope John Paul II. In June of 2005, the *Charter* and the *Norms* were revised, and in 2011, the *Charter* was revised in order to re-affirm the deep commitment of the Church to create a safe environment for children and youth.

The Diocese of Joliet first promulgated a policy regarding sexual abuse of minors on June 14, 1990. Revisions were made in September 1993, in June 1997, in June 2003 and July 2008. As with the previous edition, this policy is intended to be in conformity with provisions from the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* and from the *Essential Norms for Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors*.

This policy is designed to ensure appropriate responses to allegations of sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults by clergy, seminarians, religious, employees and volunteers. It addresses preventing sexual abuse through education and screening, reporting abuse, providing pastoral assistance to persons affected by abuse and the processing of allegations.

A copy of this policy is to be given to all clergy and seminarians as well as to all employees and volunteers who will sign an acknowledgement of its receipt. The policy is also to be published on the diocesan website.

II. DEFINITIONS

A. Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is any sexual conduct with a minor or a vulnerable adult which is either unlawful and/or contrary to the moral teaching of the Church, which is engaged in by an adult employee/volunteer of the Diocese or a parish. It also includes the acquisition, possession, or distribution of pornographic images of minors for the purposes of sexual gratification, by whatever means or the use of whatever technology.

B. Ministerial Relationship

A ministerial relationship is established between persons when care or services are given. Persons in a ministerial relationship with others include clergy, seminarians, diaconal candidates and religious, as well as employees and volunteers.

C. Employee

An employee is a person who is compensated for services to a diocesan agency, parish or school.

D. Volunteer

A volunteer is a person who functions without compensation in any role within a diocesan agency, parish or school.

E. Minor

A person who has not reached his or her 18th birthday is defined as a minor.

F. Vulnerable Adult

A vulnerable adult is one who habitually lacks the use of reason (Canon 99) or who, because of mental or physical disability is incapable of protecting himself/herself from sexual abuse.

G. Director of Child and Youth Protection

The Director of Child and Youth Protection, also known as the Director, is appointed by Bishop to oversee the workings of the Diocesan Office of Child and Youth Protection.

III. POLICIES

A. Healing and Reconciliation

1. Ministry to Victims

The Victim Assistance Coordinator, appointed by the Bishop, is to coordinate assistance for the immediate pastoral care of persons who claim to have been sexually abused as minors or vulnerable adults. Such care will serve to nurture healing and reconciliation.

The Diocese of Joliet is to assist the healing process of the abused. For this reason, it seeks to treat all allegations of sexual abuse with a prompt, direct, thorough and confidential pastoral response. Appropriate assistance is offered to victims in accord with recommendations of the Review Board. This may include counseling, spiritual direction, support groups or other social services.

2. Ministry to the Accused

Appropriate steps are to be taken to protect the reputation of the accused during an investigation of sexual abuse. The accused will be encouraged to retain the assistance of civil and/or canonical counsel. When the preliminary investigation of a complaint so indicates, a priest/deacon may be referred for appropriate medical and psychological evaluation, as long as this does not interfere with the investigation by civil authorities.

When an accusation has been unfounded, the diocese provides pastoral assistance, including psychological counseling to a person who was wrongly accused. All efforts are made to restore the good name of the person falsely accused (*USCCB Norms 13*).

3. Ministry to Communities

In faith communities in which the sexual abuse occurred or where a priest/deacon has been removed, a meeting is held between a representative of the Pastoral Response Team and representatives of the affected community. If requested, the Pastoral Response Team offers pastoral assistance (spiritual and psychological) to the affected faith community.

Pastoral Response Team membership includes the Bishop or his representative, and may include the following individuals or their delegates: Superintendent of Schools, Director of Religious Education, pastor/head of institution, religious superior, as well as experts in trauma response/intervention services.

B. Prevention

1. Education

To foster a safe environment for children and vulnerable adults the Diocese is to have in place educational programs which include information about sexual abuse, its identifying signs, controlling access to children, appropriate boundaries in relationships, reporting incidents of abuse and the effects of abuse on victims.

Prior to beginning service, all clergy, seminarians, diaconal candidates, religious, employees and volunteers are required to present proof of attendance at a *Virtus Protecting God's Children* program. This requirement applies to all persons who are involved with minors on a regular, recurring basis and those who may have an opportunity to be alone with children

during parish, school or religious education sponsored events. The program is also available to parents and guardians.

All persons who continue involvement with minors are required to participate in an updating educational program at least annually.

Children and youth are to receive instruction appropriate to their age level (*USCCB Charter 12*).

Prior to beginning service, all clergy, seminarians, diaconal candidates, religious, employees and volunteers are to receive a copy of the *Standards of Behavior for Those Working with Minors*, and are to sign an acknowledgement of its receipt. The *Standards of Behavior* includes information about appropriate boundaries for those who have regular contact with children and young people (*USCCB Charter 6*). This requirement also applies to all persons who are involved with minors on a regular, recurring basis, and those who may have an opportunity to be alone with children during parish, school or religious education sponsored events.

Procedures for reporting abuse are to be readily available in printed form and are to be the subject of periodic public announcements (*USCCB Charter 2*).

The Office of Formation of Priests and Deacons is responsible for providing programs of human formation for chastity and celibacy that will assist clergy in living their vocation in faithful and integral ways. (*USCCB Charter 17*)

2. Screening

Prior to beginning service, all clergy, seminarians, diaconal candidates, religious, employees and volunteers are required to undergo a criminal background check. This requirement also applies to all persons involved with minors on a regular recurring basis and those who may have an opportunity to be alone with children during parish, school or religious education sponsored events. Backgrounds are evaluated using the resources of law enforcement or other agencies (*USCCB Charter 13*). Background checks are to be performed every five years for all persons who continue involvement with minors.

All seminarians, extern priests, diaconal candidates, and diocesan and parish employees must be fingerprinted for the purpose of obtaining a criminal background check. Fingerprints are submitted to the Illinois State Police and the Federal Bureau of Investigation for clearance as a condition of employment.

Fingerprinting is administered by a vendor approved by the Diocese of Joliet. Prior to the individual being permitted to begin service, results are evaluated by the Diocese with its legal counsel when appropriate.

Name-based background checks are used only for volunteers or for renewals of employees who were screened through that type of background check.

Anyone with a substantiated allegation of sexual abuse may not minister, be hired or volunteer in a diocesan agency, parish or school.

a. Employees

Any prospective diocesan, parish or school employee must complete an application that includes:

1. Employment history, indicating positions held, dates of employment, name(s) of the immediate supervisor, phone number(s), and reason(s) for cessation of employment;
2. Any allegations of physical or sexual abuse made against him/her, which may/may not have involved civil or criminal complaints;
3. A signed authorization to release the applicant's employment history to the prospective employer, as well as at least two references who are not relatives.

Hiring agents must review the employment history and the references provided. All documents must be retained in the employees' file during the time of employment.

b. Volunteers

All volunteers are to complete an informational questionnaire provided by the entity for which they are intending to volunteer.

c. Businesses Furnishing Personnel

Any business supplying personnel for janitorial services, etc., is required to provide the diocese/parish/school with a copy of the criminal background checks of those persons who will be working at the facility. The business is also to provide a written guarantee that such personnel have never been arrested or convicted of any crime, that they are not aware of any complaint or allegation relating to sexual abuse or substance abuse, and that they are suitable to work in an environment where there may be contact with minors. Such information must be kept in a secure file along with the background checks of other employees and volunteers.

d. Members of Religious Orders

When any religious is presented for assignment or residence in an institution or parish, the appropriate religious superior is to provide the Bishop with a written statement about the person's suitability for ministry including information regarding allegations of sexual abuse.

e. Priests/Deacons

When a priest/deacon seeks an assignment in the Diocese of Joliet, his diocesan bishop or religious superior is to provide the Bishop with a written statement of suitability for ministry including information regarding allegations of sexual abuse.

No priest/deacon of the Diocese of Joliet who has a substantiated allegation of sexual abuse or who has committed sexual abuse may be transferred for an assignment to another diocese.

f. Candidates for Priesthood and the Diaconate

The Diocese of Joliet uses adequate screening and evaluations in determining the fitness of candidates for admission to the seminary or to the diaconate. Additional evaluations are conducted during the years of formation. A comprehensive psychological profile of each seminarian/diaconal candidate must be obtained before anyone is admitted to the priesthood or diaconate.

C. Response to Allegations

1. Reporting

All persons, whether parishioners, employees, or volunteers who have reasonable cause to suspect an incident of sexual abuse by anyone including clergy, seminarians, religious or employees have a serious moral obligation to report the incident or allegation to civil officials (*USCCB Charter 4*).

Under Illinois law, certain personnel (including school, child care and recreational program personnel) are considered mandated reporters and must report to the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) any situation in which they have reasonable cause to suspect physical or sexual abuse of a minor. Clergy are mandated reporters as to child sexual abuse. Reporting abuse of a vulnerable adult is made to the appropriate state agency.

Reports of abuse should also be made to the Victim Assistance Coordinator. Complaints against members of religious orders are to be reported to the Victim Assistance Coordinator as well as to the respective superior.

Procedures for making a complaint are available on the diocesan website, at parishes or diocesan offices, and are the subject of periodic public announcements.

When a person reports an allegation of sexual abuse, the person will be received with the utmost respect and pastoral sensitivity. Victims are advised of and supported in their right to report abuse to civil authorities (*USCCB Charter 4*).

2. Assessment and Determination

a. The Bishop is immediately informed of any allegation. If he determines, after consultation with others, that there is a semblance of truth to the allegation, and that it is not manifestly false or frivolous, the assessment process begins. (*Questions & Answers Regarding the Canonical Process for the Resolution of Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors*) However, in no way will the process conflict with an investigation being pursued on a state or federal level. .

b. The Bishop notifies the Director of the Office of Child and Youth Protection (hereafter referred to as the Director) of the allegation, who in turn notifies the Review Board. He then appoints the Director to oversee an investigation. This investigation will be conducted by professional investigators and may include other competent professionals such as diocesan counsel and members of the Review Board.

c. The Review Board advises the Bishop in his assessment of allegations of sexual abuse of minors and in his determination of a cleric's suitability for ministry. (*USCCB Charter 2*) In certain cases, the Review Board may consider it important to speak directly with the person making the allegation, the accused person, or other persons for the sole purpose of gathering additional information. The Board will also offer to the Bishop other advice it considers pertinent to the case.

d. The Bishop has sole responsibility for deciding if it is more likely than not that sexual abuse has occurred and for determining any action with regard to the accused. In the case of clerics of the Diocese of Joliet, with sending the case to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in Rome, all in accord with Canon Law.

e. After reviewing the case, the Congregation will advise the Bishop as to which canonical processes are to be followed.

APPENDIX

REVIEW BOARD

The Review Board is a consultative body that advises the Bishop regarding allegations concerning the sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults and related issues. (*USCCB Charter 2, Norms 5*)

A. Membership

The Review Board, whose members are appointed by the Bishop, is composed of not less than nine or more than eleven members of outstanding integrity and good judgment. The majority of members are laypersons, none of whom are diocesan employees.

Members are to have expertise in one of the following areas: social work, civil law, education, treatment of sexual abuse of minors, or clinical treatment of sexual disorders. One member should be the parent of a minor and one member should be a pastor. When possible, one member is a victim/survivor of child sexual abuse or a parent of the same.

Annually members select a chairperson and a vice-chairperson from among themselves.

Consultants to the Board may include a representative of the Bishop, a canon lawyer, the Promoter of Justice, the Chancellor, the diocesan attorney and the Victim Assistance Coordinator.

B. Terms

Members are appointed for a term of five years, which may be renewed once (*USCCB Norms 5*). The Bishop has the right to terminate the appointment of a member at any time.

C. Meetings

The Review Board convenes whenever there is business to conduct or assembles at least on an annual basis. It will ordinarily meet in person, but members may participate by conference call.

D. Duties

Members of the Review Board are to:

- Advise the bishop in his assessment of allegations of sexual abuse of minors and in his determination of a cleric's suitability for ministry.
- Review diocesan policies and procedures for dealing with sexual abuse of minors on a regular basis.
- Advise the Bishop, as requested, on all aspects of cases, whether retrospectively or prospectively.
- Provide new members with an orientation to the Board and present them with a copy of the *Pastoral Policy Regarding Sexual Abuse of Minors*, a copy of the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* as well as other appropriate materials.
- Attend all meetings, especially those involving particular cases.

E. Criteria for Making Recommendations

- A simple majority of the entire Committee membership is needed to make a recommendation to the Bishop.
- Members may be present in person or electronically
- When considering an allegation of sexual abuse, each member decides, after considering all the evidence presented, whether the allegation is more probably true than not.

F. Communication

The Bishop will insure that the alleged victim and the accused are provided with appropriate and timely information about the progress of the case.

G. Confidentiality

Deliberations and conclusions reached by the Review Board are to be held in strictest confidence. The Bishop, or his authorized representative, are the only persons who communicate with the alleged victim and the accused, the media or any other persons.

DIRECTOR OF CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION

The duties of the Director of the Office of Child and Youth Protection include, but are not limited to the following:

- Oversee the implementation of this Policy on a regular basis.
- Report regularly to the Bishop and the Review Board about the implementation of this Policy and the progress of individual cases of abuse.
- Supervise the work of the Victim Assistance Coordinator.
- Serve as the central information point for child abuse issues among pertinent members of the Diocesan Curia and diocesan attorney.
- Maintain all records pertaining to child protection and child abuse.
- Provide staff assistance to the Review Board.
- Prepare for the annual audit.
- Communicate to the public, i.e., within the Church community and beyond, the efforts of the Diocese of Joliet to prevent the abuse of minors and to heal past abuse.

VICTIM ASSISTANCE COORDINATOR

The duties of Victim Assistance Coordinator include, but are not limited to the following:

- Receive allegations of sexual misconduct against minors and vulnerable adults.
- Listen with compassion to the experiences and concerns of victims.

- Advise victims of their right to report to civil authorities and inform them they will be supported in the exercise of that right.
- Inform the Bishop of allegations including any anonymous allegations or allegations that do not contain sufficient information.

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

The Diocese does not enter into settlements which bind the parties to confidentiality settlements unless the victim requests confidentiality and this request is noted in the text of the agreement (*USCCB Charter 3*).

RECORDS AND REPORTS

The Director maintains written and electronic documentation regarding all information acquired by the Review Board, its determinations and decisions.

All of the above records are confidential. However, law enforcement officials receive whatever information is necessary for them to carry out their duties.

Information and records generated by mental health practitioners, including those of alcohol and substance abuse treatment providers, are retained or released in accordance with the provisions of Illinois and Federal laws.

The Diocese communicates transparently and openly about issues of sexual abuse within the parameters of legally mandated confidentiality and privacy especially to the faith communities directly affected (*USCCB Charter 7*).

The Diocese publishes an annual public report on the progress made in implementing this policy and cooperates with audits conducted by the National Review Board.

POLICY SUBMISSION

A copy of this policy as well as any revisions to the policy is filed with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops within three months of its effective date (*USCCB Norms 2*).

DIOCESE OF JOLIET STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR TO SAFEGUARD AGAINST CHILD ABUSE

Revised 2014

In accordance with the *USCCB Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* (Article 6) and Diocese of Joliet's *Policy Regarding the Sexual Abuse of Minors* (revised 2013), these *Standards of Behavior* have been developed to foster and maintain an atmosphere of trust and safety for minors participating in various programs within the diocese. All personnel, be they employees or volunteers who staff these programs, are expected to maintain high standards of professional, ministerial and moral behavior, and are expected to comply with these Standards.

A. Definitions

- A minor is defined as anyone under the age of 18.
- A vulnerable adult is one who habitually lacks the use of reason (Canon 99) or who, because of mental or physical disability is incapable of protecting himself/herself from sexual abuse.
- Physical abuse is non-accidental injury that is intentionally inflicted upon a minor or vulnerable adult.
- Sexual abuse is any conduct with a minor or vulnerable adult which is either unlawful and/or contrary to the moral teaching of the Church, which is engaged in by an adult employee/volunteer of the Diocese of Joliet or a parish/school/agency. It also includes acquisition, possession, or distribution of pornographic images for the purposes of sexual gratification, by whatever means or the use of whatever technology.
- An employee is a person who is compensated for services to a diocesan agency, parish or school.
- A volunteer is a person who functions without compensation in any role within a diocesan agency, parish or school.

B. Standards

The following Standards are intended to assist Church personnel in making decisions about interactions with minors and vulnerable adults in Church sponsored and affiliated programs. They do not supersede state law or State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services requirements, nor are these guidelines intended to be all inclusive.

Responsible Professional Conduct

1. Ministry to minors respects the rights of parents to educate and form their children. Therefore, activities with minors are to be conducted with the explicit knowledge and consent of parents or legal guardians.
2. Church personnel are never to leave minors unattended during a class, session, event, etc.
3. Church personnel are responsible for releasing minors in their care only to parents, legal guardians, or other persons designated by parents or legal guardians at the close of services or activities. In the event that Church personnel are uncertain of the propriety of releasing a minor, they are to contact the parent or legal guardian of the minor.
4. Church personnel are prohibited from the use, possession or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal substance while working with minors. They are also prohibited from furnishing alcohol or illegal substances to minors or permitting minors to use such in their presence.
5. Church personnel may provide transportation in accordance with the Diocese of Joliet Transportation Policy.

6. Church personnel are prohibited from using physical discipline for the behavior management of minors. This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behavior by minors

Physical Proximity and Modesty

1. Church personnel are never to be nude in the presence of minors. Rare exception may be made when necessary for specifically designated medical personnel.
2. Minors are never to be nude in the presence of Church personnel. The appropriate supervision of locker-rooms may be the exception.
3. Changing and showering facilities for adults are to be separate from those for minors.
4. When officially approved overnight stays are necessary, an adult should never share a bed, sleeping bag or cot with a minor. An adult is not to spend the night in the presence of a lone minor, unless it is his/her own child.
5. Houses used as residences for priests and religious are exclusively for their use. Minors should not be allowed in the private quarters of those residences. With the exception of occasional visits from family members, minors are not permitted to be overnight guests in the residences of priests or religious.
6. Counseling areas should have transparent windows or open doors. Care should be made to have another adult in the general vicinity during counseling sessions.
7. Adults should never meet with minors on a one-to-one basis in secluded areas or closed rooms.

Physical Contact

Appropriate affection between Church personnel and minors is important for a child's development. It is a positive part of Church life and ministry and should be given in public but not in isolated or secluded areas.

1. The following forms of affection, whether initiated by a minor or adult, are regarded as examples of appropriate contact:
 - Side hugs
 - Shoulder to shoulder hugs
 - Pats on the upper back
 - Handshakes
 - "High-fives" and hand slapping
 - Arms around shoulders
 - Holding hands while walking with small children
 - Sitting beside small children
 - Kneeling or bending to receive hugs from small children
 - Holding hands during prayer
 - Pats on the head when culturally appropriate
 - Reciprocation of appropriate gestures initiated by a minor
2. The following forms of affection, whether initiated by a minor or an adult, are regarded as examples of inappropriate contact:
 - Lengthy embraces
 - Full frontal hugs
 - Kisses
 - Holding minors of school age on the lap
 - Touching buttocks, chest or genital area
 - Touching the knees or legs of minors
 - Tickling
 - Wrestling and/or roughhousing
 - Piggyback rides

- Any type of massage
- Any form of unwanted attention

Communication

1. Verbal communication with minors is to be appropriate.
2. Church personnel are prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations or the telling of jokes with sexual content. However, it is permissible in an educational setting to discuss issues of human sexuality. These classes will convey the Church's views on the topics. If minors have other questions not answered or addressed by individual teachers, they should be referred to their parents or guardians. Church personnel are not permitted to discuss their own sexual activities with minors.
3. Church personnel are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented or morally inappropriate materials (magazines, cards, videos, films, clothing, etc.) or accessing similar materials through electronic or other technological means in the presence of minors.
4. Church personnel are prohibited from using technology to interact with minors on issues related to sexuality, including but not limited to sexually related conversations, and viewing and/or distributing sexually motivated materials, and inappropriate expressions of affection.
5. Church personnel should remind minors that all communication sent digitally (texting, email, social network sites, posts, notes, etc.) is not confidential and may be reposted to others.
6. Church personnel's electronic interactions are reserved for professional and/or, ministry related purposes.
7. Laws regarding mandated reporting of suspected abuse/neglect/exploitation of minors and vulnerable adults equally apply to the virtual worlds as they do to the physical world.

Undue Attention

Certain conduct has been used by adults to develop inappropriate relationships with minors. Activities include singling out minors or showing them unusual attention. Some examples of this behavior prohibited for Church personnel are:

1. Presenting gifts to a minor that would not ordinarily be given to an entire group of children, excluding awards, etc.
2. Allowing a minor to drive automobiles of Church personnel even though another adult may be present
3. Singling out a particular child for special dinners, events, trips or outings

The *Standards of Behavior to Safeguard Against Child Abuse* is to be given to all diocesan and parish employees, as well as to all parents and parishioners whose children attend parochial schools or attend Religious Education programs. The document is posted on the diocesan website: www.dioceseofjoliet.org

Members of the clergy, religious, employees and all volunteers who work with minors will be required to receive in-service education that addresses their role in protecting minors.

Minors who serve as employees or volunteers will be informed that they have a right to a safe working environment and a right to disclose behavior not in accord with these standards.

CAUTION: Anyone who has reason to believe that a minor is being physically or sexually abused should make a report to Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). Mandated reporters must report to DCFS at 1-800-252-2873 (1-800-25ABUSE)

Types of Touches

Teach your children the names of their private body parts. Help them understand that they are the boss of their own body. Explain that there are three kinds of touches:

- **Safe touches.** These are touches that keep children safe and are good for their bodies. Safe touches include hugging, holding hands, pats on the back, and an arm around the shoulder. Safe touches can also include touches that might hurt, such as removing a splinter.
- **Unsafe touches.** These are touches that hurt children's bodies, feelings, or spirits, for example, hitting, pushing, pinching, and kicking. This also includes the sexual touches described in the previous section. Teach children that these kinds of touches are not okay.
- **Unwanted touches.** These are touches that might be safe but a child doesn't want. These include the sexual touches discussed earlier. It is okay for a child to say no to an unwanted touch, even if it is from a familiar person.

For Young Children

Young children remember better how to protect themselves from sexual abuse when they learn and practice a few simple steps so they don't have to wonder what to do, or have to stop and think. Children can be taught to follow these three steps when someone breaks the touching rules.

- Say no or words that mean no.
 - Get away.
 - Tell a grown-up.
- Expand your child's understanding of the third step by teaching the following:
- Never keep secrets about touching.
 - Always tell about a touching problem even if it has gone on for a long time.
 - Keep telling until someone believes you.

Teach Assertiveness Skills

Children who are assertive are better able to use the safety steps effectively and resist unsafe situations. Assertive behavior includes standing up straight, looking directly at the person and using a strong, clear voice.

Safety on the Internet

It is important for parents to educate children about internet risks and monitor use of the Internet. Some rules:

- Never give out personal information or use a credit card online without your parent's permission.
- Never share passwords with anyone.
- Never arrange to meet someone in person you have met online unless parents go along with you.
- Never reply to uncomfortable messages. Always tell parents about them.



For Teens or Pre-Teens

Honest, open discussions about sexual values/limits, healthy relationships, and personal safety can make a difference. Teens should:

- Recall that human sexuality is a graced gift from God. Intimate touching and sexual intercourse are morally appropriate only within marriage.
- Know their own wishes, limits and values, and clearly communicate them to their dates. They should listen to their date's limits and respect them.
- Notice if their date is not respecting their limits and wishes or if their date's behavior doesn't seem right.
- Trust their feelings and intuition. If they are feeling pressured into sex, they have the right to say no.

Parent Guide



- Be assertive and act immediately if their limits are reached, even if it means making a scene.
- Understand that it is never too late to say no and never too late to hear no.

More Safety Tips for Teens

- Avoid drugs or alcohol, which reduce one's ability to think clearly and manage one's behavior.
- Always pour your own beverages at a party and keep them in sight. Date-rape drugs can be put in drinks and are often undetectable.
- Go to parties with a buddy and look after each other. Always have a safe way home.
- Meet a date in a public place or stay around others.
- Tell someone about the date, where it will take place, and what time it will end.
- Take a cell phone along if possible.

The Bottom Line

- No means no whenever a person feels pressured about anything and it should be respected!
- If a person says no and the other person continues to touch or to force touch it is abusive behavior.
- If a person forces another person to have sexual intercourse, it is rape, a criminal offense.

Safe Families

Being a parent is one of life's greatest challenges. However, if you have a strong relationship built on a foundation of trust, and your children have skills in self-management, relationship-building, and problem-solving, they are more likely to make safe choices and set personal safety boundaries.

For more tips for parents, please visit <http://www.cfchildren.org/parents/parenttips/>

If someone has been abused,
contact the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services at
1-800-25ABUSE (1-800-252-2873)

Understanding & Preventing Child Sexual Abuse



Diocese of Joliet

16555 Weber Road, Crest Hill, IL 60403
www.dioceseeofjoliet.org

Dear Parents and Guardians,

The Diocese of Joliet is committed to promoting an environment that will help ensure the safety of children and young people. If you have participated in a *Protecting God's Children* session, you have already received much information.

This brochure is the next step in our efforts to help keep children safe. You are the primary educators of your children, so it is important that you talk with them personally about their safety. The material in this brochure is designed to give you background information about sexual abuse, to inform you about other ways to keep your children safe, and to provide you with tips for talking to your children.

Staff members at the Religious Education Office (815-221-6147) and at the Catholic Schools Office (815-838-2181) are available to help you. Please call them if you have any questions about the material contained in this brochure or if you need more information.

Sincerely,



Sister Judith A. Davies, OSF
Chancellor

SOME BACKGROUND INFORMATION

What Is Child Sexual Abuse?

Child sexual abuse is the use of a child for sexual purposes by an adult or an older, more powerful person, including an older child. *It is a crime in all 50 states.* Sexual abuse is called incest when it happens between family members.

Who Are the Offenders?

- Most sexual abuse is committed by a person the child knows and trusts.
- Offenders come from all walks of life and from all social and ethnic groups.
- Offenders actively work to develop trusting relationships with children.

Who Is At Risk?

- Sexual abuse happens to boys and girls from all social and ethnic groups from infancy to 18 years.
- Young children are especially at risk.

Why Don't Children Tell?

Some reasons children do not tell are:

- They have been taught to obey adults.
- They promised or have been bribed to keep the abuse secret.
- They have been threatened by the offender and are afraid to tell.
- They feel guilty because they believe that the abuse is their fault and are ashamed to tell.
- They are confused because the offender is someone whom they know and trust.
- They have been convinced that the abuse is normal or okay.
- They are too young to know the touching is not appropriate, especially if someone they know and trust does it.
- They don't know the words to tell about the abuse.

Do Children Lie About Abuse?



Children rarely lie about sexual abuse. More often, they are afraid to tell.

PROTECTING YOUR CHILDREN

Here are some things you can do:

- Educate yourself about sexual abuse.
- Learn and practice specific guidelines for protecting children from sexual abuse.
- Talk to your children about touching safety. (See *Teaching Personal Safety Skills*.)
- Teach your children personal safety rules before they reach school age.
- Allow your children to participate in personal safety instruction.

Safety with Babysitters

- Ask babysitters for references and check them.
- Interview babysitters in person. Ask how they discipline children. Ask *what if* questions to find out how they would cope with tricky situations.
- Inform them about your family safety rules, including touching safety rules.
- Set other rules for the sitter. (TV, phone use, and friends)
- Make surprise visits to check on them.
- Ask your children what happens when a babysitter is there and whether they like him or her. If they don't like the babysitter, ask for reasons.

Follow these guidelines even if the babysitter is a family member.

Guidelines for Single Parents

If you are a single parent and are dating, this brings unfamiliar adults into your home.

- Let your new friend know your family's safety rules, especially about touching.
- Tell him or her that your children have been taught to tell if any of these rules are broken.
- Don't leave your children alone with a new friend until you know him or her well.
- Ask your children if they like the new person and why or why not.
- Watch your children's reactions for clues to how they feel.

TEACHING PERSONAL SAFETY SKILLS

Talking openly and honestly sets a tone that helps children feel safe and allows them to talk to you about anything. *Talk with them about touching and private body parts.* Here are some tips:

- Make touching safety a part of your family's safety rules.
- Take advantage of everyday teachable moments: bath time, physical play situations, when a child expresses curiosity about his body or sexuality, and before a child goes out without you.
- Read a book or view a video on touching safety together with your child.
- Revisit the conversation. Don't just talk about this important matter once!

Teach Your Children These Rules

- It is not okay for someone to touch your private body parts.
- It is not okay for someone to touch his or her own private body parts in front of you or to ask you to touch them.
- It is not okay for someone to ask you to take your clothes off or to take photos or videos of you with your clothes off.
- It is not okay for someone to show you photos or videos of people without their clothes on.

Content of this brochure is adapted from
"Keeping Children Safe from Abuse: Tips for Parents and Caregivers"

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www.cfchildren.org

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Resources for Parents

General Internet Safety Guides

www.onguardonline.org
www.NetSafeKids.org
www.pollyklaas.org
www.willcountysao.com
www.cyberangels.org

Internet Filtering Software

<http://kids.getnetwise.org>

Internet and Cell Phone Safety

www.NetSmartz.org
www.microsoft.com/protect
www.safeteens.com
www.safekids.com
www.netparents.org



Tips on Cell Phone Use

1. Take precautions with your child's cell phone.
2. Be specific about cell phone use and set up specific rules about how and when the phone will be used. Set a limit on how much time children can use each month and how many text messages they can send and receive.
3. Emphasize and enforce the rule that teens must follow all laws when driving and using a cell phone.
4. Review school policies and agreements regarding cell phone usage on school grounds during the school day and after school.
5. Explain potential legal consequences of sexting.
6. Make the child aware texting reveals your phone number to whomever you send a message.
7. Children should:
 - know** that predators can also send messages and call to arrange meetings.
 - know** that if they receive a bullying or threatening text message, they should report it immediately to a parent or trusted adult
 - not answer a call from a number that they are not familiar with or not expecting.
8. Review your service plan to learn which features can be blocked to protect children.

PARENT GUIDE



Internet Safety for Children & Teens



Diocese of Joliet
16555 Weber Road Crest Hill, IL 60403
www.dioceseofjoliet.org

Internet Safety



www. thearticle.com

The amount of information available on the Internet continues to grow at an astounding rate. Opportunities abound for social networking, building online profiles, sending video and photos, sharing ideas and thoughts through blogs, tweets. These ways of socializing and communicating can be fulfilling and worthwhile, yet they do come with certain risks of inappropriate content, contact and conduct. This brief guide attempts to provide general information and where to go for additional information.

General Parent Guidelines

1. **Talk to Your Children**—children of all ages (including toddlers) see parents using multiple electronic devices. Children as young as 2 are now using computers for learning. As soon as your child is using an electronic device, it is time to talk to them about online behavior, safety, and security.

How to begin

- Start Early
- Create an Honest and Open Environment
- Initiate conversations
- Communicate your values
- Be Patient

2. **Learn How to Monitor What Your Children Do Online**

There are many good sites that help parents learn how monitor, control, and block electronic use such as getnetwise.com. The site has many video tutorials, extensive tools that parents can use and a wealth of information.

For Parents of Children (Aged 5-12)



1. Keep the computer in a public place with the screen facing outward.
2. Establish family rules and guidelines to include:
 - a. setting limits on how much time they spend online
 - b. no personal information given
 - c. no school information disclosed
 - d. review of pictures posted.
3. Reinforce the dangers of and penalties for sharing personal or school information. Many schools have policies against students posting information about the school, including the school name, teacher names, etc. Carefully review your school's policies and agreements with your child.
4. Prohibit any meeting in person with someone he/she knows only online, unless you are present.
5. Inform your children that you will monitor Internet use, messaging, and social networking in order to keep them safe.

For Parents of Teenagers (Aged 13-17)

1. Teens have more Internet access through cell phones, mobile devices, or friend's computers, as well as more time to themselves. Consequently, it is not realistic to always be in the same room as your teens when they are online. Reinforce the concept that you and other family members can walk in at anytime, and ask them what they are doing online.

2. Emphasize the concept of credibility and not everything they see on the Internet is true.
3. Let them know that everything on the Internet is public and that it is close to impossible to "take something back once it is posted"
4. Share stories using real examples of teens who have been harmed or hurt because of unsafe online practices.
5. Remind your teen that behind screen names, avatars, profiles are real people with values and feelings. They need to be mindful of what they say and exercise good judgment.
6. Inform your teen that many institutions and companies routinely comb social networking sites to determine if potential job applicants fit their expectations.
7. Remind students that photos can be as damaging to one's reputation as words. Review pictures that are posted.
8. Meeting someone contacted online carries considerable risk and is not advised. If a meeting is arranged adhere to the following:
 - a. do not meet alone.
 - b. go with a trusted adult..
 - c. meet in a public place.
 - d. if not what you expected, walk away and tell a parent or trusted adult.
9. Do not overreact if and when you find out that your teen has done something online of which you do not approve.
10. Reinforce the expectation that parents monitor Internet use and that safety rules must be followed.
11. If teens confide in you about something scary or inappropriate that they encountered online, your first response should not be to take away Internet privileges. Try to be supportive and work with them to help prevent this from happening in the future.