

**DIOCESE OF OWENSBORO
POLICY REQUIREMENTS
GOVERNING
DIOCESAN, PARISH, AND SCHOOL
MINISTRIES INVOLVING MINORS
AND VULNERABLE INDIVIDUALS**

(For Diocesan Ministries Including Youth Ministry, Faith Formation,
Catholic Schools, Camps/Retreats, Ministry to the Elderly/Disabled)

Effective August 2010

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents.....	200:i
Letter from Bishop.....	200:1
Introduction.....	200:2
Adults in Ministry.....	200:3
Liability: General Information.....	200:3
Dealing with Known Sex Offenders.....	200:5
Requirements for Adults Ministering with Minors (i.e. under 18).....	200:5-12
Types of Adult Involvement.....	200:5
Safe Environment Requirements.....	200:6
General Policies.....	200:6-7
Special Situations.....	200:7-9
Medical Emergencies.....	200:7
Crisis Situations.....	200:7-8
Completing an Incident Report.....	200:8
Reporting Suspected Abuse.....	200:8
Policy Violations/Adult Conduct Concerns.....	200:8
Search and Seizure Policies.....	200:9
Complying with Exposure Control Plan.....	200:10
Requirements for Ministering with Minors Off-Site.....	200:10-12
Activity Information Form/Liability Release Form.....	200:10
Adult Chaperones/Volunteers/Participants—e.g.catechists, drivers, youth workers, etc:.....	200:10
Transportation.....	200:10-11
Insurance.....	200:11
Overnight Accommodations.....	200:11-12
Providing Informal Counseling to Minors or Adults.....	200:13
Requirements for Adults Ministering with Elderly Individuals and Vulnerable Adults.....	200:14-15
Forms Section.....	300:1-27
<u>Form A: Permission Form/Liability Release and Emergency Medical Release and Health Information for Minors.....</u>	<u>300:2-3</u>
<u>Form B: Emergency Medical Release and Health Information for Adults.....</u>	<u>300:4</u>
<u>Form C: Activity Information Form and Liability Release.....</u>	<u>300:5-6</u>
<u>Form C-Schools: Permission Form-Trips for School Activities of One School Day or Less.....</u>	<u>300:7</u>
<u>Forms D-1 through D-3: Codes of Conduct for Minors.....</u>	<u>300:8-10</u>
Search and Seizure Policy (included here for convenience).....	300:11
<u>Forms D-4 and D-5: Codes of Conduct for Adults.....</u>	<u>300:12-14</u>
<u>Form E: Volunteer Drivers Form.....</u>	<u>300:15-16</u>
<u>Form E-1: Liability Coverage for Leased or Hired Vehicles Form.....</u>	<u>300:17</u>
<u>Form F: Incident Report Form.....</u>	<u>300:18-19</u>
<u>Form G: **DO NOT USE**Acknowledgement of Receipt of Summary of Sexual Abuse Policy & Procedures.....</u>	<u>300:20</u>
<u>Form H: Abuse Report Form.....</u>	<u>300:21-22</u>
<u>Form I: Confidential Notice of Concern.....</u>	<u>300:23</u>
<u>Background Check Forms (Forms J, K, and L).....</u>	<u>300:24-27</u>

Appendices

To Those Who Minister in the Diocese of Owensboro,

By virtue of our baptism, every Christian is called to share in the ministry of Jesus Christ. This represents both wondrous privilege and awesome responsibility; and if every person does not answer this call, the Church and the world are diminished. Embracing our varied callings of service and witness requires all to act in humility, in charity, and in justice. We are called to love and serve as Jesus loves and serves, and as such, aspire to the noblest of standards, most especially in service to children, young people, and the vulnerable.

The Diocese of Owensboro has set forth policy requirements for all who join us in our Gospel ministries. These have been developed over the years to meet the needs of youth ministers and religious educators, Catholic school personnel, and all who may find themselves working with minors and vulnerable adults as part of the Catholic Church. These spell out the philosophy, principles and specific requirements that must govern our actions as ministers, employees, and volunteers in positions of leadership.

Please study these requirements and incorporate them fully into your work to assure that the dignity and value of every person may always be affirmed and safeguarded. These guidelines assure that each of us, and our beloved Catholic Church, may act with the highest regard for all God's children. It is my fervent prayer that these guidelines continue the path of renewing the confidence of all people that the Catholic Church will be a safe and holy place for all to gather and learn and celebrate in God's name.

In Christ's love,

Most Reverend William F. Medley
Bishop of Owensboro

INTRODUCTION

Those who act in the name of the Church have special influence in the lives of the people to whom they minister. Because of the respect and even reverence with which many people seek help from the Church's ministers, there is an imbalance of power and hence a vulnerability inherent in the ministerial relationship.

A primary concern for Church representatives involved in ministry with minors and vulnerable adults must be for the safety of the youth and adults involved. All in ministry should take every appropriate step to protect those in their care from accidental or deliberate harm.

In 2002 the bishops of the United States created the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, which established Safe Environment requirements for dioceses. Article 12 of the Charter addresses training and standards of conduct, and Article 13 requires that dioceses "evaluate the background...of all diocesan/eparchial and parish/school or other paid personnel and volunteers whose duties include ongoing, unsupervised contact with minors. Specifically, they are to utilize the resources of law enforcement and other community agencies."

If you find reading through these policy requirements overwhelming, remember that planning for the safety of all is in itself an act of caring. These policies are based on common sense and should quickly become second nature.

The following policy requirements, adopted by the Diocese of Owensboro, are intended for all diocesan, deanery-level, and parish activities/programs involving minors and vulnerable adults, including youth ministry, faith formation, Catholic schools, camps/retreats, informal counseling settings, and ministry to the elderly/disabled. They should be followed accurately and responsibly by all adults working with minors and vulnerable adults, for the safety of all.

ADULTS IN MINISTRY

Though we are the Body of Christ, we are also sinners, a wounded people. This reality underlies all the concrete steps we take to create safe environments for all who share in our Church.

The Diocese of Owensboro Statement of Policy and Procedures on Sexual Abuse states:

Sexual misconduct by paid personnel and volunteers of the Diocese of Owensboro is contrary to Christian morals, is a grievous sin, and may be criminal under the laws of the Commonwealth of Kentucky. All personnel of the Diocese must comply with applicable state and local laws regarding incidents of actual or suspected sexual misconduct and with the ... [diocesan sexual abuse] policies. (Art. 1.1; p. 402:15)

The vast majority of people would never think of committing a crime against a child or vulnerable adult. Nevertheless, certain individuals pose a threat in just about any assembly of people but are not easily recognized as risks. Safe Environment training is designed to educate adults about risks and concerns regarding sexual abuse so that all Church settings can be designed and monitored for safety.

When seeking to employ a person, it is required that *all references* be contacted (cf. 402:18 no. 9.6) and documentation must be kept of each person's response as to whether or not an allegation or conviction has occurred against the prospective employee (cf. 402:18 no. 9.6.1). No one will be hired or retained who has had a substantiated claim of sexual abuse of a minor or if such a case is still pending against the person. (cf 402:18 no. 9.6.2 and 9.6.3) **Note: Be sure to follow all diocesan guidelines/policies regarding employment as found in the *Diocesan Policy Manual* (cf. 309:1-49).**

Every employee of (a) the Diocese of Owensboro, (b) its parishes or schools, or (c) any Catholic entity that serves minors in any way, must receive Safe Environment training and complete a criminal background check, **whether that individual is directly working with minors or not.** Employees occupy a visible and important role with real or potential access to information, money, or persons being served. Should an individual's results include offenses of a sexual nature, that individual must not be employed.

Volunteers working with minors must abide by the requirements listed for Supervisory Adults as specified below in the "Requirements for Those Ministering with Minors."

LIABILITY: GENERAL INFORMATION

1. The term "risk management" is often used to describe those efforts to minimize possible injuries to those who are involved in Church/school functions or on Church/school property.
2. The law considers individuals and entities responsible for the safety of those in programs under two legal theories: "tort liability" and "premise liability" (see below for an explanation).
3. The Diocese has retained coverage that will protect individuals acting within the scope of their ministry.
4. This protection is based upon limiting the possibilities of injuries and resulting lawsuits through the precautions of program administrators, as outlined in these policies.
5. There is no protection for any criminal or intentional act.

Tort Liability: Under the principle of "tort liability" participants in Church/school programs are considered "invites," to whom certain duties are owed. If through neglect or improper conduct, those duties are not met, those in supervision will be liable for the consequences. Issues to consider under this legal theory of tort liability are:

- clear communication of activity details with parents or legal guardians

- clear communication of behavioral expectations of participants and the consequences of misbehavior
- safe transportation
- appropriate supervision for all activities
- safety while in attendance
- proper maintenance of all facilities to reduce the possibility of accidental injury
- the possibility of mistreatment or abuse of youth within a Church/school program

Negligence is an unintentional act or omission, which results in injury. Legal negligence must include four elements. If any of these elements is missing, legal negligence cannot be found. The four elements of negligence are:

1. **Duty:** The person charged with negligence must have had a responsibility or a duty in the situation. An injury that occurs at a place or time where the person does not have responsibility does not constitute liability.
2. **Violation of duty** means that the person charged with negligence was not engaged in the responsibility or duty. Accidents can happen even with proper supervision but there is no negligence if there is no violation of duty.
3. **Proximate cause** means that the violation of duty was the cause of the injury. Proximate cause is complex because it includes the concept of foreseeability. Proximate cause does not necessitate that the responsible person has foreseen the injury but that a *reasonable* person should have foreseen that some injury was possible.
4. **Injury:** Some injury must happen for finding negligence. Injuries can be physical, emotional or psychological.

Premise liability: Under the principle of “premise liability,” one is considered responsible for the safety of all who come onto the property of which one is in possession or control. If someone is injured while on Church/school premises, due to an unsafe condition of the property, there could be liability. Therefore, it is recommended that anything in need of repair be brought to the attention of the appropriate staff person. Issues to consider under premise liability are:

- proper installation and maintenance of buildings and equipment
- proper maintenance of the grounds, including driveways, parking lots, sidewalks, and steps
- emergency safety equipment such as exit lights, fire safety equipment, fire extinguishers, first aid kits
- emergency safety procedures such as fire and tornado procedures and drills, etc.
- physical layout issues related to Safe Environment policies.

All supervisory personnel, whether volunteer or paid, full-time or part-time, must take the following policies very seriously. Doing so serves the needs of families, parishes, schools, and the Diocese. These policies do not constitute legal advice in any specific situation. One should consult organization counsel for specific advice.

Despite all the proper precautions and the best planning, someone may get injured. Should one become aware of any incident of injury or property damage, that individual should report it as soon as possible to the sponsoring agent. This is done by submitting an Incident Report Form J (in Forms section) to the Diocesan Office of Administration.

To insure weather preparedness, a supervisory adult may want to have an assessment conducted by The Severe Weather Preparedness Office at 270-744-6440.

DEALING WITH KNOWN SEX OFFENDERS

Some individuals have been identified as high Safe-Environment risks because they are known sex offenders. Parishes and schools are required to contact the diocesan Office of Safe Environment for help in designing specific standards of conduct for such an individual.

REQUIREMENTS FOR ADULTS MINISTERING WITH MINORS (UNDER 18)

Minors are to be considered as restricted individuals. That is, they are NOT independent. Legal parent(s)/guardian(s) have the right to know where they are and what they are doing. Those under 18 years old are NOT adults and are not permitted unfettered decisions.

Types of Adult Involvement:

Non-Supervisory: Some adults involved with events for minors and/or vulnerable adults are not placed in positions of authority or supervision. They come as adult participants or as parent observers. Form B (Emergency Medical Release and Health Information for Adults) or its equivalent provides information in case of an emergency. In addition, those individuals should complete and submit the Non-Supervisory Adult/Adult Participant Code of Conduct (Form D-5). See “Adults in Ministry” information above in these policies, and contact the diocesan Office of Safe Environment for help in addressing any issues.

Supervisory: Other adults are placed in positions of authority or supervision and so need to abide by all Safe Environment requirements listed below. In this diocese those specifically obligated to comply with Safe Environment are:

- any person employed, full- or part-time, by the diocese, its parishes, its schools, or any Catholic entity that serves minors in any way
- any adult participating in an overnight situation involving minors or vulnerable adults
- anyone placed in a position of authority, trust, or supervision (of a minor or vulnerable adult) at a special event that lasts more than twelve hours (e.g. Vacation Bible School, Youth 2000)
- anyone placed in a position of authority, trust, or supervision (of a minor or vulnerable adult) who serves for more than twelve hours in one year
- special circumstances: The diocese, deanery, school, or parish may decide that, to address the risks for a particular setting or event, even supervisory adults falling below the “twelve hours” need to meet Safe Environment requirements.

When a youth event includes non-supervisory adult involvement, the level of supervision must increase. Supervisory/non-supervisory adults and participants should be identified in some way, e.g. color-coded name tags. Options for these situations include:

- Non-supervisory adults may be specifically assigned to an individual who is Safe-Environment-cleared.
- Additional supervisory adults (not already assigned to other responsibilities) can be added to monitor the setting, e.g. hallways, restrooms, isolated areas.

Supervisory adults from other dioceses who are attending events within the Diocese of Owensboro must provide evidence from their diocese of compliance with their diocesan Safe Environment policies, set forth by the USCCB.

NOTE: For their safety, supervisory adults of age 18 through 20 years old have limitations on their responsibilities. They may not transport, act as chaperones, or be the sole supervisors.

Safe Environment Requirements:

1. Complete a diocesan-determined Safe Environment training program and provide documentation of successful completion to the appropriate coordinator/supervisor.
 - a. This training must be completed once every five (5) years.
2. Read summary of the Diocesan Sexual Abuse Policy (full policy for laity found on pages 402:14-25 or on diocesan web site) and acknowledge acceptance of that policy, either digitally within the diocesan training venue or by signing the Acknowledgement of Receipt of Summary of Sexual Abuse Policy and Procedures (in Forms section or in sexual abuse policy document, page 402:19).
 - a. This step is handled in conjunction with training; however, ministry locations are encouraged to have forms reviewed annually.
3. Read and acknowledge the Supervisory Adult Code of Conduct Form, either digitally within the diocesan training venue or by signing Form D-4 (in Forms section).
 - a. The purpose of parish-, school-, and diocesan-sponsored activities is to provide opportunities for people from all over the Diocese of Owensboro to grow in their faith, have a good time, form Christian friendships, and have educational and learning experiences. Therefore, the diocese has certain expectations, listed on the Code of Conduct, for those choosing to be involved.
 - b. Acceptance of the Code is usually handled in conjunction with training; however, ministry locations are encouraged to review the Code annually with supervisory adults.
4. Complete Diocesan Background Check Release Forms—See Forms section, or find on diocesan web site, and receive results from diocesan background check
 - a. Clearance letter will be issued by diocesan Office of Safe Environment. Any restrictions or non-clearances will be communicated both to the individual involved and to the pastor/principal/designated supervisor at any indicated place(s) of ministry.
 - b. Background checks cover a period of five (5) years, at which point new forms must be submitted.

General Policy Requirements:

1. **Permission Form signed for any minors participating**—Parent or legal guardians (proof of guardianship) must complete a Permission Form A (in Forms section). This includes permission plus emergency health information.
 - a. Form must be signed and witnessed by any other individual 21 years of age or older.
 - b. An original form must be kept on file at the parish for parish events.
 - c. An original Permission Form A must be taken on all overnight or out of town trips.
2. Activity organizers should communicate clearly to participants and parents/guardians the times involved for activities. This includes earliest allowable arrival time, times for leaving and returning (if applicable) and expected pick-up time. If any participants remain past pick-up time, follow the Adult Codes of Conduct; i.e. “At least two adults should be present when there is only one minor, and at least two minors should be present when there is only one adult.”—(See Form D-4.)
3. **Emergency Medical Release and Health Information Form for Adults**—Form B (in Forms section) is needed for any adults attending youth functions.
 - a. These forms should be kept with youth forms in case the need for medical attention arises during an event.
4. Priority must be given during any Church activities to ensure that all participants fulfill their Sunday or Holy Day obligations.
5. The Sacrament of Reconciliation should be offered in an open setting. (See Adult Codes of Conduct—Forms D-4 and D-5, in Forms section).
6. Verify with participant’s family that all medical form information and emergency contact information is current.

7. Audiovisual, music (including lyrics), and print resources used in programs must be screened by an adult authorized by the program director. This must be done **PRIOR TO USE** to ensure the appropriateness for the participants. In order to use an R-rated movie or movies rated with an even stronger designation, parents/guardians must provide specific, written permission. (Catholic Movie Hotline: 1-800-311-4CCC)
8. **Codes of Conduct for Minors completed**—The purpose of parish-, school-, and diocesan-sponsored activities is to provide opportunities for people from all over the Diocese of Owensboro to grow in their faith, have a good time, form Christian friendships, and have educational and learning experiences. Therefore, the diocese has certain expectations for those choosing to be involved.
 - a. Depending on the age of the minor participating, the appropriate Code of Conduct should be read and signed by participant and parent/guardian:
 - i. K-3 Code of Conduct: Form D-1(in Forms section)
 - ii. Grades 4-6 Code of Conduct: Form D-2 (in Forms section)
 - iii. Middle School and High School Code of Conduct: Form D-3 (in Forms section)
9. Every off-site activity* **MUST** have at least 2 Safe-Environment-compliant chaperones. If the group includes both males and females, then chaperones should also include both. This is absolutely required for overnight and/or out-of-town activities.
10. Minimum Number of Chaperones (for all off-site situations):
 - a. High-school-level activities: one (1) chaperone per ten (10) minors,
 - b. Middle-school-level activities: one (1) chaperone per seven (7) minors
 - c. Under-middle-school-level activities: one (1) chaperone for every five (5) minors
11. For on-site sessions such as faith formation classes or youth ministry, reasonable numbers of supervisory adults should be available.
12. Supervisory adults should reasonably be available and visible at all times during the events, take part in enforcing the rules, and take control of any situation that the young people are unable to handle.

* Note for Catholic Schools: Some school-sponsored activities do not require the recommended level of chaperones. In these cases the chaperone number would be determined by the principal. It is recommended that **NO** school activity have less than 2 chaperones, preferably one male and one female.

Special Situations:

Medical Emergencies:

A minor may become ill or have an accident while participating in a diocesan-, school-, or parish-sponsored event. Responsibilities of the adult acting in a supervisory capacity involve:

1. Assess seriousness. This might include asking the participant, calling a parent/guardian, asking another adult with medical knowledge. If there is any question about seriousness, adult should call 911 or other emergency number.
2. Refer to Form A for participant's basic medical information.
3. In the case of any serious situation, contact parent/guardian as quickly as possible. (Participant's relevant phone numbers should be on Form A.)
 - a. For every incident that involves professional medical attention or for which potential medical attention might be required, complete Incident Report Form—Form F (in Forms section)
 - b. Incident report must be filed with diocese within two (2) weeks.

Crisis Situations:

In the event of a potentially violent situation, the priorities will be for **SAFETY** and **NOT BETRAYING TRUST** with the attempt to find the balance between the two. An adult must focus on the individual's behavior and **NOT** on his/her personal judgment.

1. Always make sure emergency contact information is current and accurate for any event.
2. Should a crisis situation develop where an individual constitutes **A THREAT TO HIM/HERSELF OR OTHERS**, the appropriate responses might include:

- a. Call parent, legal guardian, emergency contact, host family (for exchange student) provided on registration form. If those cannot be reached or refuse to be involved, call an emergency contact number provided for local crisis line or counselors (See Appendix section.) Communicate the situation and your level of concern; suggest the need for an assessment; and ask about initiating that process.
- b. If the situation escalates beyond your control, call 911 or legal authorities.
3. If there is immediate danger, one or more adults will act as a physical presence while another/others will call 911 to activate appropriate emergency personnel. The police will be summoned for any injury occurring during an incident involving violent or aggressive behavior.
4. If danger is suspected, the youth will be interviewed by a pair of adults who have a rapport with them. Confidentiality between the adults and youth shall be maintained.
5. Search and seizure (page 300:11) will be used as a means of last resort. Legal counsel may be sought prior to any search.

Completing an Incident Report:

1. An Incident Report Form—Form F, (in Forms section) must be completed for every incident that involves professional medical attention or for which potential medical attention might be required. This may include other incidents (i.e. damaging property). (Report anything that needs immediate/potential attention.)
2. Keep these on file at the parish/school and send a copy to the diocesan Office of Administration.
3. An Incident Report should be completed and reported within 24 hours minimum, or two weeks maximum, from the date of the incident.

Reporting Suspected Abuse:

Anyone who obtains information of known or suspected physical or sexual abuse, neglect, exploitation and/or harassment of any participant, shall report said information immediately to the proper authorities (the Department of Social Services listed under State of Kentucky, and/or law enforcement officials). After the report has been made, the adult making a report should inform his or her supervisor/principal.—**Form H: Abuse Report**, (in Forms section). See Appendix section for information about relevant state law.

Policy Violations/Adult Conduct Concerns:

All adults, whether supervising or participating in activities involving minors or vulnerable adults, are required to read and accept a Code of Conduct. The Adult Codes of Conduct define appropriate and inappropriate conduct and remind the individual that:

If I become aware of anyone violating this ... Code of Conduct, **I will take responsibility to report that violation** to the appropriate level of supervisor or to the diocesan Office of Safe Environment so the issue can be addressed and minors can be kept safe.

Whenever policy violations are left unchecked, minors and vulnerable adults are put at greater risk of exploitation because appropriate boundaries are blurred.

Occasionally, an individual observes behavior that crosses the line of appropriate conduct as interpreted by the Code of Conduct and reasonable safety factors. A person observing inappropriate conduct should get help from a supervisor immediately so the problem can be addressed promptly. If the situation is so worrisome or if the intervention does not provide satisfactory assurance that the problem has been adequately addressed, further steps should be taken. **Form I: Confidential Notice of Concern**, (in Forms section) may be completed by (a) an individual who observes troubling conduct, (b) a supervisor with whom a concern has been shared, or (c) a representative at the diocese (e.g. Youth Ministry, Faith Formation, Safe Environment) with whom the observations are shared. The information presented in the form may be used by diocesan personnel (a) to help clarify policy for individuals at a particular location or (b) to determine if a behavior or pattern of behaviors needs further intervention.

Diocesan Search and Seizure Policy: To safeguard all involved, adults may feel the need to make a physical inspection of a person or his/her possessions. If an adult asks a student/participant to hand over something, that is not considered a search. If an adult asks a student/participant to take something out of his/her pocket, that is not considered a search. One only needs to have another adult present if a student/participant is searched.

Schools shall include this Search and Seizure policy in the Parent-Student Handbook.

Diocesan Search and Seizure Policy states:

1. No search shall be conducted unless there are reasonable grounds to believe the search will reveal evidence of a violation of the Code of Conduct or the law.
2. Two adults must be present for a search. Searches shall only be conducted by those directly responsible for the person's conduct (e.g. Director/Coordinator of Faith Formation, youth minister, teacher/principal, parish chaperone, etc.) along with another adult witness.
3. When a search is conducted, either the conductor of the search or the adult witness must be the same gender as the subject of the search.
4. **Searches:**
 - a. **do NOT involve touching** of the participant by an adult—Note: NO PAT-DOWN SEARCHES
 - b. **are limited** to a person's outer clothing, pockets, or his/her personal effects (e.g. handbags, backpacks, etc.)
 - c. may include requiring participant to empty pockets or personal items
 - d. may include requiring participant to pull pants legs up and pull socks down
5. Only legal authorities (i.e. police) have authorization to conduct pat-down searches.
6. No search shall be conducted in the presence of any other participant (except the parent/guardian of the person being searched, if he/she is in attendance).
7. Legal authorities, if appropriate, and parent/guardian will be notified immediately.
8. Items that may be seized are illegal items (e.g. weapons, drugs, etc.) and any other possessions reasonably determined by authorized personnel to be a safety/security threat.
9. Other items may be seized temporarily if they disrupt or interfere with the individual's or others' participation. Such items will be returned to the participant at the end of the activity. (Examples include cell phones and other electronic equipment, keys, etc.)
10. Those who fail to cooperate with search request shall be subject to other disciplinary action.

NOTE: School or parish property does not belong to the student/participant. It is recommended that schools and programs include a policy in the parent/student(participant) handbook that states "the school/parish is co-tenant of lockers and desks and reserves the right to search them at any time without notice."

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Complying with Exposure Control Plan:

The diocesan Exposure Control Plan has been developed for the prevention and control of diseases caused by blood-borne pathogens. It represents measures required for implementation and adherence to OSHA standards. (See Appendix section)

- Employees and volunteers should be aware of this plan and have an understanding of it as it references their ministry.
- This plan will be reviewed and updated annually or as necessary (e.g. when new tasks are assigned, when tasks change, when new employee positions with potential exposure are added, when an exposure incident indicates need for plan revisions).
- A copy of this plan should be in a location known and available to appropriate personnel.

REQUIREMENTS FOR MINISTERING WITH MINORS OFF-SITE-(not at church/school site)

Activity Information Form/Liability Release Form required—**Form C and Form C-Schools** (in Forms section) includes Activity Information Form with details of the activity, transportation details, and costs in order to provide parents/guardians with all relevant facts. The Liability Release Form on the back of Form C gives release for specific events.

Adult Chaperones/Volunteers/Participants—(including catechists, drivers, youth workers, etc.):

1. Any adult volunteer under age 21 must have supervision and may not be considered a chaperone.
2. All chaperones must be at least 21 years of age.
3. Parishes should verify that adults understand their responsibilities as listed in the Supervisory Adult Code of Conduct (Form D-4) and Diocesan Sexual Abuse Policy (acknowledgement available in Forms section).
4. NO activity* should have fewer than 2 chaperones. If the group includes both males and females, then chaperones should also include both. This is absolutely required for overnight and/or out-of-town activities.
5. Minimum Number of Chaperones (for all off-site situations):
 - a. High-school-level activities: one (1) chaperone per ten (10) minors,
 - b. Middle-school-level activities: one (1) chaperone per seven (7) minors
 - c. Under-middle-school-level activities: one (1) chaperone for every five (5) minors
6. Chaperones should reasonably be available and visible throughout the event(s), take part in enforcing the rules, and take control of any situation that the young people are unable to handle.
7. No adult should be alone with a minor (anyone under age 18), as noted in the Adult Codes of Conduct (Form D-4 and Form D-5).
8. Form B (in Forms section) is the Emergency Medical Release and Health Information for Adults Form and is needed for any adults attending youth functions—Form B should be kept with youth forms in case the need for medical attention arises during an event.
9. Drivers transporting minors for events should abide by all transportation policies noted below.

* Note for Catholic Schools: Some school-sponsored activities do not require the recommended level of chaperones. In these cases the chaperone number would be determined by the principal. It is recommended that NO school activity have less than 2 chaperones, preferably one male and one female.

Transportation:

1. Drivers for youth events must be at least 21 years of age.
2. Commercial vehicles should be used for transportation whenever possible.
3. If it is not possible to use commercial vehicles, then privately owned vehicles may be used as long as the owner is aware that his/her vehicle insurance is primary. Liability coverage limits are recommended to be set at \$300,000 at a minimum. It has been a trend for several years that individuals who drive frequently for organizations larger than themselves carry a minimum coverage of \$500,000.

4. **In addition to meeting Safe Environment requirements**, all volunteer drivers must fill out the **Volunteer Drivers Form—Form E** (in Forms section).
 - a. This form will be kept on file in the parish/school/institution and updated as needed, at least annually.
 - b. If the volunteer answers “yes” to any of the questions on the form, he/she may be disqualified as a driver. Issuance of citations and/or conviction as a felon are not automatic bars to consideration.
5. Reminder: Driver’s information on Form E may be more current than Safe Environment background check information for that driver.
6. A separate seatbelt must be worn by every individual in a privately owned vehicle.
7. The driver is responsible to ensure that all vehicle safety and traffic laws are observed.
8. All drivers are encouraged to be aware not to place anyone weighing less than 100 pounds near an air bag.
9. When more than one vehicle is used to transport participants, all drivers should have written directions/maps and be briefed on the area. Ideally each vehicle should have compatible emergency communication devices (cell phones, etc.) along with appropriate information such as channel and/or cell phone numbers.
10. No adult should be **ALONE** in a vehicle with a minor (anyone under age 18) unless he/she is parent or guardian of the minor. See Adult Codes of Conduct—Form D-4 and D-5 (in Forms section).
11. All drivers should drive directly to and from designated locations without unnecessary stops. Acceptable stops might include: illness, emergency bathroom breaks, and/or vehicle problems.
12. It is strongly recommended that at least one vehicle be equipped with a **first aid kit** and a **first aid manual**.
13. No firearms are to be carried in any vehicle at any time.

Insurance:

1. **BEFORE** any out-of-town/overnight activity, the Diocesan Office of Administration should receive the following information (For example: use Form C and add the approximate number of participants.) via fax, (270-683-6883) e-mail (josepha.boone@pastoral.org) or mail (600 Locust St., Owensboro, KY, 42301):
 - a. Destination
 - b. Method of transportation
 - c. Approximate number of Adults and Youth
 - d. Departure Date
 - e. Return Date
2. **NOTE:** All privately owned vehicles’ insurance is primary.
3. If a particular location requires a Certificate of Proof of Insurance for Diocesan liability, a minimum of two weeks is required to obtain the Certificate from the Office of Administration.
4. If a parish does not have vehicles, fill out **Form E-1** (in Forms section). ****This form needs to be completed and FAXed or mailed four (4) to seven (7) days prior to the event.**

Overnight Accommodations:

The policies listed below apply to all diocesan-, deanery-, parish-, and school-sponsored events involving minors. Any questions about applying these policies should be directed beforehand to the Office of Safe Environment (270-683-1545)

A--General Overnight Accommodations:

1. As stated earlier, a completed Permission Form A for every participant under age 18 must be taken on all overnight or out-of-town trips for parish or diocesan events. Adults should have a

completed Adult Participant Emergency Medical Release Form B. Form B (in Forms section) should be kept with youth forms in case the need for medical attention arises during an event.

2. A lone adult shall never engage in an overnight trip with a minor or minors. (Exception: A parent/guardian may participate with his/her own child/ren only.)
3. All sleeping areas must be clearly segregated between males and females.
4. All sleeping areas should be segregated between adults and minors.
5. Adults should inform minors of safety rules and security measures prior to the trip and remind them periodically during the trip.
6. During the day, there should be periodic group meetings to be sure everyone is present.

B—Hotel/Motel Accommodations:

1. Care is to be taken when booking hotels for groups. If possible, all of the rooms should be on the same floor or location in the hotel. (Adults should request when making reservations.) “Suite” type facilities may allow greater supervision.
2. Adjoining rooms should be requested when possible for better supervision. The group leader must check all rooms before assigning them to groups to avoid males and females having adjoining doors.
3. Adults are never to stay alone overnight in the same room with a minor or minors. (Exception: A parent/guardian may stay in the same room with his/her own child/ren only.)
4. No minor should be allowed to leave the hotel property without authorized adult supervision.
5. Fire procedures should be reviewed at the hotel/motel.
6. Chaperones should set a curfew and make a room check at night.
7. For small groups at least one designated adult should be available throughout the night to handle any concerns. (The front desk should know who that person is and his/her room number.)
8. For larger groups a rotation of adults should supervise the area at all times. At night this would mean having at least two designated adults [male and female for mixed groups], either volunteer or paid, awake and monitoring the area throughout the night.
9. Pay TV and long-distance telephones lines should be turned off at the hotel desk. The use of pay phones should be encouraged for long distance calls.

C—Other Accommodations:

1. A rotation of adults should supervise the area at all times. At night this would mean having at least two designated adults [male and female for mixed groups], either volunteer or paid, awake and monitoring the area throughout the night.
2. For tent camping larger tents that accommodate more people should be used whenever possible to allow for better supervision.
3. Adults are never to stay alone overnight in the same tent with a minor or minors. (Exception: A parent/guardian may stay in the same tent with his/her own child/ren only.)

PROVIDING INFORMAL COUNSELING (to Minors or Adults):

“Informal counseling,” as described here, refers to listening/direction provided by Church representatives to minors/vulnerable adults under their supervision or to other adults who seek their counsel. It is specifically distinguished from formal counseling provided by certified counselors in a professional setting.

1. Church representatives must not step beyond their competence in counseling situations and shall refer to other professionals when appropriate.
2. In cases where the person being counseled is already in a counseling relationship with a counseling professional, Church representatives should make it clear what role they can provide to the individual. Generally this should be focused on spiritual assistance.
3. Church representatives should carefully consider the possible consequences before counseling someone with whom they have a pre-existing relationship.
4. Church representatives assume the full burden of responsibility for establishing and maintaining **clear, appropriate, professional boundaries** in all counseling-related relationships. They should presume that the potential for exploitation or harm exists for either party.
5. To protect the counselor and counselee, when there are boundary concerns on either side, the counselor should log those concerns, report them to the pastor, and refer the counselee to a more appropriate individual.
6. It would be wise for the Church representative to keep a log of the times and places of counseling.
7. Information obtained of a confidential nature shall be kept confidential, except for compelling professional reasons or as required by law. Before a person makes a disclosure, if feasible, the Church representative should inform the person being counseled about the disclosure and the potential consequences; i.e. confidentiality is limited when there is clear and imminent danger to the client or to others. In such cases, the Church representative will contact the necessary authorities or other professionals, disclosing only the information necessary to protect the parties affected and to prevent harm.
8. Any one-on-one meetings must be held in a public area or in an area that is visible to others (such as in an office with an interior window or an open door) so that another individual can be present outside the room as a witness.
9. Including # 8 above, all provisions listed within the Adult Codes of Conduct (Form D-4 and D-5) apply within any counseling setting, whether the counselee is a minor or an adult.

**REQUIREMENTS FOR ADULTS MINISTERING WITH ELDERLY INDIVIDUALS
AND/OR VULNERABLE ADULTS**

The term “vulnerable adults” here is defined as it is defined in the “Diocese of Owensboro Statement of Policy and Procedures on Sexual Abuse, part II,” (Art. 3.8; p. 402:16):

Vulnerable persons means all persons under 18 years of age and any person 18 years of age or older when that person, because of impairment of mental or physical function, is unable or unlikely to report abuse or neglect without assistance. (Cf. canons 97 §2, 99)

General Policies:

While the Diocese of Owensboro does not require those ministering with the elderly or with vulnerable adults to meet Safe Environment requirements, Church representatives are highly encouraged to abide by Safe Environment policies for the protection of all involved. This would include any group activities. Separate policies regarding ministries to vulnerable adults will apply to other settings.

1. Safe Environment Requirements:

- a. Complete a diocesan-determined Safe Environment training program and provide documentation of successful completion to the appropriate coordinator/supervisor.
- b. This training must be completed once every five (5) years.
- c. Read summary of the Diocesan Sexual Abuse Policy (full policy for laity found on pages 402:14-25 or on diocesan web site) and acknowledge acceptance of that policy, either digitally within the diocesan training venue or by signing the Acknowledgement of Receipt of Summary of Sexual Abuse Policy and Procedures (in Forms section or in sexual abuse policy document, page 402:19).
 - i. This step is handled in conjunction with training; however, ministry locations are encouraged to have forms reviewed annually.
- d. Read and acknowledge the Supervisory Adult Code of Conduct Form, either digitally within the diocesan training venue or by signing Form D-4 (in Forms section).
 - i. The purpose of parish-, school-, and diocesan-sponsored activities is to provide opportunities for people from all over the Diocese of Owensboro to grow in their faith, have a good time, form Christian friendships, and have educational and learning experiences. Therefore, the diocese has certain expectations, listed on the Code of Conduct, for those choosing to be involved.
 - ii. Acceptance of the Code is usually handled in conjunction with training; however, ministry locations are encouraged to review the Code annually with supervisory adults.
- e. Complete Diocesan Background Check Release Forms—See Forms section, or find on diocesan web site, and receive results from diocesan background check
 - i. Clearance letter will be issued by diocesan Office of Safe Environment. Any restrictions or non-clearances will be communicated both to the individual involved and to the pastor/ principal/ designated supervisor at any indicated place(s) of ministry.
 - ii. Background checks cover a period of five (5) years, at which point new forms must be submitted.

2. Activity organizers should communicate clearly to participants (and guardians, if applicable) the times involved for activities. This includes earliest allowable arrival time, times for leaving and returning (if applicable) and expected pick-up time. If any participants remain past pick-up time, at least two supervisory adults should be present when there is only one participant, and at least two participants should be present when there is only one supervisor.

3. **Emergency Medical Release and Health Information for Adults Form—Form B** (in Forms section) is required and will provide necessary information if an adult participant or supervisor has an emergency while involved with an event.

4. Priority must be given during any Church activities to ensure that all participants fulfill their Sunday or Holy Day obligations.
5. The Sacrament of Reconciliation should be offered in an open setting. (See Supervisory Adult Code of Conduct—Form D-4.)
6. Verify with participant (or guardian, if applicable) that all medical form information and emergency contact information is current.
7. Audiovisual, music (including lyrics), and print resources used in programs must be screened by an adult authorized by the program director. This must be done PRIOR TO USE to ensure the appropriateness for the participants.
8. For events involving vulnerable adults, supervisory adults should accept the Supervisory Adult Code of Conduct (Form D-4), and participants should read and sign a Code of Conduct appropriate to their understanding. (Forms D-1, D-2, D-3, or D-5)

