



ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA

MOVING FORWARD IN FAITH:

Renewing Our Commitment to Victim Assistance, Child Protection, and Priestly Integrity

Bulletin No. 2

May 2011

Introduction:

This is the second in a series of periodic bulletin inserts developed by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia to provide information to parishioners. Each bulletin insert will focus on action steps the Archdiocese has taken to assist victims, advance the protection of children, and ensure the integrity of the Priesthood.

Information about the *Standards of Ministerial Behavior and Boundaries*:

- The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops "**Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People**," approved in June 2002 and revised in June 2005, is intended to create a secure environment for young people throughout the Church in the United States.
- Article 6 of the Charter states, "There are to be clear and well-publicized diocesan/eparchial standards of ministerial behavior and appropriate boundaries for clergy and for any other paid personnel and volunteers of the Church in positions of trust who have regular contact with children and young people."
- Following the Charter, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia adopted its own Standards of Ministerial Behavior and Boundaries on May 5, 2003. (<http://bit.ly/AOPministerialstandards>)
- The Standards provide a clear guideline for acceptable behavior with young people.
- They make us all alert to possible inappropriate behavior by adults and provide direction for reporting concerns.
- The Standards cover: Conduct for Pastoral Counselors, Confidentiality, Conduct with Children, Harassment and Reporting Misconduct.
- Some examples of actions that would be considered violations of the Standards include: using foul language with a child, driving a child home alone after a practice, hugging and kissing a child, meeting with a child at a location other than a church or school alone, engaging in a parish or school sanctioned activity without at least one other adult.
- As part of the Safe Environment Training program mandated by the Archdiocese all priests, deacons, staff and volunteers who come into contact with children must read the Standards of Ministerial Behavior and Boundaries, acknowledge understanding of the contents and sign a pledge to abide by the Standards.
- By observing this code of conduct, adult leaders, whether clergy, coaches, teachers, staff or volunteers, serve as role models for the children they work with and show how adults should relate to young people.
- Any Church personnel or volunteers who violate the Standards may be removed or suspended from their position depending upon the nature of the offense.

Information About an Update to the Standards:

The Information and Communication Technology Addendum

- The Archdiocese realizes Church personnel and volunteers must effectively use digital means of communicating as part of their mission to spread the Good News of the Gospel in their work with young people.
- It also recognizes that part of its commitment to children and young people includes updating current policies to govern interaction in the rapidly changing electronic communication environment.

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CONTINUED:
Bulletin No. 2

- In July 2011, an Addendum (or update) to the *Standards of Ministerial Behavior and Boundaries* will take effect. The Addendum covers Information and Communication Technology.
- The full text of the Addendum can be found at (<http://bit.ly/AOPstandardstechaddendum>).
- It provides guidance regarding appropriate interaction with minors through social networks, text messaging, e-mail, websites, video chatting, videos, photographs, blogs, and micro-blogs.
- It affirms the Archdiocesan directive that *all* communications with minors must be faithful to the teachings and values of the Catholic Church.
- The Technology and Communication Addendum states that the permission of the parent or guardian must be obtained in writing in order for an adult leader to communicate with minors via telephone, cell phone, text messaging, e-mail, social networks, or any other electronic means.
- It also provides clear guidance for acceptable interaction by adults with minors via digital means.
- Adults serving children and young people must always relate to them in ways that respect their physical, psychological, and emotional boundaries. In this regard, there is no difference between in person and digital interaction.
- Some examples of actions that would be considered violations of the addendum include: texting a child regarding a personal matter, allowing children to have access to personal postings on social media networks, setting up a youth ministry related website without permission, posting pictures of children on a youth group related website or related Facebook page without written permission from a parent or guardian.
- In keeping with the general purpose of the Standards, this addendum can alert us all to inappropriate behavior by adults and allows for a greater degree of accountability.
- The Archdiocese will provide online training for this addendum to the *Standards of Ministerial Behavior and Boundaries* for all clergy, lay employees and volunteers who work with young people.
- Any Church personnel and volunteers who violate the Addendum on Technology may be removed or suspended from their position depending upon the nature of the offense.

Implementation and Online Training:

- The Technology and Communication Addendum to the Standards of Ministerial Behavior takes effect July 1, 2011.
- Between May 1, 2011 and June 30, 2011, all clergy, lay employees, and volunteers who are in service to youth are required to complete a 15 minute online training concerning this addendum administered by the Archdiocesan Office for Child and Youth Protection.
- The information in this bulletin is being provided to parishes, schools and Archdiocesan institutions regarding the implementation and online training (www.aoptraining.org), which is mandatory.
- Questions about the *Addendum to the Standards* or the Safe Environment training program may be directed to the Office of Child and Youth Protection at 215-587-2466 or ocyp@adphila.org.

For continuing updates and additional background information visit
www.archphila.org