

Diocese of Syracuse

Ten Basic Elements of the Diocesan Child & Youth Protection Program (Ref: Policy, Section E, Diocesan Principles and Protocols)

1. Training - Create awareness by requiring proper education and on-going training for clergy, employees, parents, religious, volunteers and children.
2. Screening - Take precautions by requiring applications, codes of conduct, criminal records check, interviews and the use of reference checks.
3. Adequate Leadership – Two trained leaders, or at least one trained leader and a parent of a youth participant, one of whom must be 21 years of age or older, are required to be present whenever youth are engaged in a diocesan sponsored or related event or service, including employment in a parish or rectory. Adults should avoid being in a vehicle with an unrelated minor without permission of the parent/guardian. The parish, department, agency or program is responsible for assuring adequate leadership. Catholic School personnel and Catholic Charities Personnel should note program specific guidelines in implementing this standard.

Diocesan agencies/programs shall establish and enforce a ratio of adults to children or youth, depending on the age and nature of the group.

The Diocesan Risk Management program recommends at a minimum that the ratio be two adults (one of whom must be VIRTUS trained) for the first seven youth participants, and an additional adult for each additional seven youth participants.

4. Open Access - Doors are not to be locked when adults are alone with children or youth. In all situations, adults are to assure appropriate privacy for youth even as the adult remains fully accessible. Teachers and volunteers involved in education should follow the best practice norms provided by the State Education Department and other accrediting agencies. Catholic Charities workers will abide by the certification, licensing, practice and supervision program requirements mandated for their areas at all times.
5. Visibility - Every effort should be made to assure one-on-one child/youth to adult contact be conducted in the view of adults and youth. Offices, classrooms, and other venues are to provide visibility via an unobstructed internal window. This statement does not apply to confessionals.

Parishes, agencies and departments shall develop a written compliance plan and ensure that it is available for review.

6. Respect for Personal Privacy - Adult leaders must respect the privacy of children and youth in all situations but may intrude to the extent that health and safety require. Adults must protect their own privacy in all situations. For example: Two, gender appropriate, adults must be present whenever locker or dressing rooms are being supervised, except in response to an emergency situation.

Photographs and/or videos of minors are taken periodically for use in parish/parochial publications. Use of the photographs and/or videos naming those minors is strictly prohibited with out the written consent of the parent/guardian.

7. Separate Accommodations - Adults and minors will not share sleeping quarters, except in the case of parents and their own children. Separate bathroom and shower facilities, or separate times for use of these facilities, are to be provided. Any exception will require written parental permission.

8. Appropriate Behaviors & Boundaries - Adults will always provide healthy Catholic Christian examples of behavior in actions, attire, behavior, and language. Adults will not use alcohol, illegal drugs, sexually explicit materials or tobacco in the presence of children/youth. Adults should be aware of comfort levels with comments, hugs, questions, etc. Leaders should strive to be aware of how what is said or done is perceived by the listener.

9. Hazing, secret ceremonies or secret organizations are strictly prohibited.

10. Vigilance - The Diocesan Child and Youth Protection Policy is to be in effect at all times. Each Diocesan department, parish, school, and agency shall have an on-site Safe Environment Committee, developed and convened periodically to ensure compliance with this policy.

After approval by the Diocesan Safe Environment Committee, parishes and departments may offer program specific guidelines.