

PROVINCE OF MIAMI POLICY ON SAFE ENVIRONMENT EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Approved by Bishops, December 5, 2005

I. SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMS

The Province of Miami, in an effort to ensure the safety of our children, and in compliance with Article 12 of the National Charter for the Protection of Children, has adopted the following policies regarding the education of children, youth and parents, in topics pertaining to Safe Environment Programs. Each diocese in the Province "...will cooperate with parents, civil authorities, educators, and community organizations to provide education and training" for children, youth and their parents/guardians about ways to make and maintain a safe environment for children and youth.

[cf. Model Policy and Procedural Guidelines for the Province of Miami Relating to Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults-Part IV F (Safe Environment Programs), December 6, 2004]

Note: This policy comports with and does not replace or supersede any others covered by the full scope of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Youth.

II. IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY IN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

A. Parents/Guardians: It is critical that awareness be raised among adults, particularly the parents/guardians of children and youth about the nature and scope of the problem of sexual abuse, keeping in mind that the Church has always affirmed that parents have the duty and the right to be the first and the primary educators of their children. Each parish and school shall provide an opportunity for parents/guardians to take part in an educational program in the prevention, recognition and reporting of sexual abuse of children and youth. This program shall be provided periodically in a systematic fashion throughout the diocese and shall include the following guidelines to assist parents/guardians in their important role:

1. Nature of the problem of sexual abuse
2. How boundaries are established and/or violated
3. Guidelines for teaching children about boundaries (safe touch)
4. Signs and symptoms of sexual abuse in children and youth
5. Prevention of sexual abuse
6. Law, policies and procedures for reporting allegations of sexual abuse

B. Children and Youth: It is critical that we educate our children and young people regarding their personal safety. Age appropriate information shall be provided to all children and youth involved in Catholic Schools, Parish Religious Education and Youth Ministry Programs in the diocese. This information must include at minimum the following topics:

1. A sense of self worth and essential God given human dignity
2. A respect for one's body as gift from God
3. Personal safety
4. Safe friends, safe adults, safe touching
5. Healthy/Unhealthy relationships
6. Seeking assistance from a trusted adult
7. Procedures for reporting