



April 2008

Dear Friends in Service to Christ,

As we move forward in our commitment to provide a safe environment in which our children and young people can grow and flourish, we also continue to learn and make adjustments along the way. If we recognize a written policy that could be clearer, we edit the text. If we learn about “best practices” from our dedicated Safe Environment Coordinators at the parish and school level, we share that expertise.

In keeping with Child Abuse Prevention Month, we want to highlight an issue that needs clarification. That area is home-based parish or school activities. Safe environment requirements apply for all school or parish sponsored activities, regardless of where the activity takes place. For example, if your parish holds a small group discussion for religious education students in a parishioner’s home, the same safe environment requirements should be met as if the small group discussion were being held on parish grounds. For a more comprehensive look at this policy we’ve attached a summary of the guidelines as they relate in the context of a home setting.

In addition, the Diocesan Review Board has also considered questions concerning background checks and safe environment training for parish or school employees and volunteers who have regular contact with minors. The requirements previously stated that these people must complete their background checks and their safe environment training within 90 days of beginning their service. Problems arose, according to parish and school Safe Environment Coordinators, when staff and/or volunteers ended their service before the 90-day period had expired. Thus, these people were not completing the required training and/or background checks. Taking the wisdom of the Review Board in mind, I have authorized a revision to this policy. Going forward, volunteers will need to complete their background check and training before beginning their volunteer service. If this completion is impossible in a given case, please contact the Safe Environment Coordinator at the Archdiocese for assistance and guidance.

Thank you for all you do to contribute to the safety and welfare of our children and young people.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Timothy M. Dolan
Archbishop of Milwaukee