



The Catholic Diocese of
Memphis
IN TENNESSEE

Living and proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Prot. N. JTS 03/003

DECREE

By this general decree, I hereby approve and promulgate the PROTOCOLS REGARDING MINISTRY TO MINORS (Appendix A) including revisions regarding: General Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse by Priests or Deacons, of the USCCB, as policy for the Diocese of Memphis in Tennessee.

This policy becomes effective November 1, 2003. Given at the Office of the Bishop in Memphis, Tennessee, this 1st day of November in the year 2003.

Most Reverend Terry Steib, S.V.D.
Bishop of Memphis in Tennessee

Deacon Charles R. Wells
Chancellor

S E A L



The Catholic Diocese of
MEMPHIS
IN TENNESSEE

Living and proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ

APPENDIX A

PROTOCOLS REGARDING MINISTRY TO MINORS

Because of its extensive ministries to young people, the Church perhaps has more involvement with minors than any other organization. Minors have no choice but to be dependent on adults, particularly those adults in positions of trust and leadership. It is vitally important, therefore, that prudence be exercised by all adults in both ministerial and social relationships with minors. In the case of troubled youngsters, who are extremely vulnerable, adults should be particularly cautious. It is expected that those who deal with troubled youth consult regularly with their supervisors.

The following protocols shall be observed by all clergy, religious, employees, and volunteers ministering on behalf of the diocese in dealing with minors. These protocols are not intended to prevent anyone from performing her or his ministry. They are meant to be of assistance in helping those who minister to young people to employ good sense in dealing with minors. If it is necessary to depart from these protocols, the minister should be prepared to justify the reason for his or her departure. There are times when one-on-one involvement with minors is unavoidable. In those cases, those who minister to minors should use extreme discretion in their relationships with young people.

All clergy, religious, employees, and volunteers ministering on behalf of the diocese shall observe the following protocols when dealing with minors:

1. Avoid physical contact when alone with a minor. In other situations where physical contact is necessary and proper, such as in the sacrament of reconciliation, use sound discretion and moderation. If a minor initiates physical contact out of affection, an appropriate response is proper if it is not prolonged.

2. Do not be alone with a minor in a residence, sleeping facility, a locker room, restroom, a dressing facility or other closed rooms that are inappropriate in a ministry relationship.
3. Seek responsible adults to be present at events involving minors, such as games and athletic activities.
4. Youth group trips must have enough adult chaperones to provide adequate supervision for the type of activity involved.
5. Do not take an overnight trip alone with a minor.
6. Topics or vocabulary that could not be used comfortably in the presence of parents are not to be employed with minors.
7. Do not provide alcohol to anyone under the age 21. Alcohol should not be used by adult supervisors if activities with minors are scheduled.
8. Do not provide drugs or intoxicants that may impair judgment to minors.

9. Drugs that impair judgment – prescribed or otherwise – or intoxicants should not be used by adult supervisors if activities with minors are scheduled.
10. Always maintain a professional attitude when dealing with minors, avoiding emotional attachment and being aware of the powerful attraction of adults in positions of authority and trust. If a personal or physical attraction begins to develop, the minor is to be referred to another qualified adult. This is particularly important in counseling situations.
11. If the one-on-one pastoral care of a youth requires frequent or regular appointments, parents should be notified that these appointments are occurring. If the subject matter precludes notification, the minister should consult his or her supervisor on the local or diocesan level.
12. Do not allow minors to have, or assist minors in gaining access to inappropriate Web sites, movies, videotapes, audiotapes, DVDs, or compact disks.
13. Do not allow minors to have, or assist minors in gaining access to pornographic materials of any type.
14. Use permission slips to promote good communication with parents and guardians. Permission slips should include the type, place, and times of the planned activity involving minors and emergency contact numbers. Plans for adult supervision should also be communicated to parents and guardians.
15. Everyone has an obligation to protect minors, particularly when they are in the care of the Church. If another adult is observed violating these protocols, that adult should be challenged in a forthright manner. Anyone who has reason to believe that child abuse is occurring or has occurred shall report the matter to a supervisor and to civil authorities. Diocesan policies and procedures regarding sexual misconduct shall be followed. This includes following Tennessee law regarding child abuse, particularly in making reports to the proper authorities.