

The following policy will serve as a supplement to the existing Safe Environment Policy of the Diocese of Dallas.

Mission Statement:

As Christian adults, we have a moral and legal responsibility and are entrusted by God with the spiritual, emotional, and physical well being of minors and vulnerable adults. As they participate in activities within or sponsored by our Diocese, it is our responsibility and commitment to provide an environment, which is safe and nurturing.

Goal:

The goal of St. Bernard Catholic Community is to provide a safe environment for its community. We will ensure that all volunteers who may interact with minors or vulnerable adults have been trained and cleared through the program and that all policies and procedures of the Diocese of Dallas and the St. Bernard Parish and School are observed.

Definitions:

“Volunteer” means any unpaid person engaged in or involved in a parish or school related activity, and who is entrusted with the care and supervision of minors, and/or persons engaged or involved in ministry who have regular individual contact with vulnerable adults.

“Entrusted with the care of...” would include those adults who have signed up to volunteer at any event that would place them in direct contact (possibly of a supervisory nature) with children or vulnerable adults. They are representing our community in an assigned capacity which implies a level of trust.

“Safe Environment (SE) Committee” consists of the members of the Crisis Management Committee, persons selected by principal and parish manager, charged with the responsibility of recommending safe environment policy for the school to the School Advisory Council, school principal, pastor and parish manager for final approval.

“Community related activity” is any activity sponsored by any organization in the name of St. Bernard Catholic School or Parish. This includes activities/events held on or off campus and within or outside of the regular school day.

Examples include but are not limited to (at the discretion of the Safe Environment Committee) :

Carnivals and festivals-signed up to work an area (children are not always with their parents)

Food service to the community-cafeteria during school day, concession stands, weekend and night events, Faith Formation, parish events, Home and School dinners, etc.

Playground/childcare roles

Any event or activity during the school day or Faith Formation classes involving our children

Board members and committee chairs. Although they are not always

working with children, they often have a lead role at functions involving children and vulnerable adults.

Non-Examples:

Off Campus events with open invitations for volunteers to include Promise of Peace Garden work, Senior Citizens Home Visits, Love of the Lake Clean Up, etc. (students remain with parents and are the sole responsibility of the parent for the entire time.) Our families are participating in another organization's event but are not supervising.

Responsibility to Enforce:

It is the responsibility of the event/activity chair or organizer to solicit volunteers and submit the list to the director of SE in the school or parish office. The list will be returned with notes regarding cleared and non-cleared volunteers.

The chair or organizer will then contact volunteers to communicate the need to update or become trained. At no time is the un-cleared individual to be allowed to volunteer until a clear status has been given by the safe environment director.

The responsibility to prove cleared status belongs to the potential volunteer. He/she must complete update or training and ask SE director to submit status to the organization he/she wished to volunteer with.

All activities involving the students acting in and on behalf of the school or parish name inside and outside of the classroom or parish event are under the direct jurisdiction of the pastor or principal. The pastor or principal has the authority and the responsibility to intervene if the activity is not functioning in the best interest of the students or community member. Ultimately, the pastor and principal have the final authority to approve any activity and set and enforce rules and policies for any and all activities acting in and on behalf of the school as mentioned above.

Training and Updates:

The SE system sends our timely automated reminders that the annual update is needed. It is the responsibility of each volunteer to maintain clearance. The SE director is not responsible for contacting each volunteer to remind them.

SE initial training is offered periodically by the school, the church and at all Diocesan parishes/schools. Annual updates are easily completed on-line. The parish or school SE directors are available to answer questions and guide each volunteer through the process.

Supervision for ALL Events:

Minors are to be directly supervised at all times when on parish/school property. Any organization hosting an event must ensure adequate volunteers to cover all accessible areas of the grounds for the supervision of minors. Special attention will focus on before and after the event when volunteers often have their children with them.

Behavior which could result in injury to guests, damage to property, or of an inappropriate nature are to be addressed and reported to the appropriate supervisor. This would include running,

chasing, over-congregation in bathrooms, running/jumping on gym bleachers or outside walls and ramps, wrestling, inappropriate language, etc.

Our grounds have very clearly marked parking spaces. At no time is a car to be parked in fire lane areas. In addition, avoid parking which would block resident drives and place a vehicle in a grassed area.

Use of electronic devices by minors is to occur under the direct supervision of the parent. Students accessing inappropriate sites and games risk exposure of other children in our care. Devices will be taken up and returned to the parent upon the conclusion of the event.

Any large event which is open to the public will require the presence of at least one off-duty, uniformed police officer. The diocesan Accounting Standards are to be observed at all times.

Hosting organizations are expected to be familiar with all policies and procedures relative to safety. Site inspections are to be conducted to determine unhealthy/unsafe surroundings and practices.

This policy is not meant to be all-inclusive. Further directives will be issued from the pastor or principal as the need arises.