

Parent To Parent

The safety of our children is important to all of us. The Saints Felicitas & Perpetua Safeguard the Children Committee would like to remind you of the following:

- All children should be accompanied to the restroom during Mass. Since the Church grounds are open to the public, it may be difficult to determine who is around for the services or not, thereby, placing unsupervised children at risk of danger.
- Please pick up children immediately following after school and parish events. Children cannot be left unsupervised on campus. Coaches, Scout leaders and other parents facilitating youth events are not supposed to drive children home without parental consent.
- Please take some time to discuss appropriate use of the internet (e.g. myspace, chat rooms, etc) with your children. These sites can be visited by anyone and information that is posted could be used inappropriately. In addition, monitor the websites and chat rooms that your children visit. Monitoring devices are available and can be purchased easily.
- Internet “blogs” and other social networking sites are exploding in popularity. These sites have also been used to lure children into inappropriate discussions. To combat this danger, www.NetSmartz.org offers a wide range of safety resources for parents and children.
- According to Highlights of the Youth Internet Safety Survey conducted by the Department of Justice, 1 in 5 children (10-17 years old) receive unwanted sexual solicitations online. In 1998, the CyberTipline (www.cybertipline.com) was established as a means whereby people can report incidents of online exploitation.
- @TEOTD Are Your Kids AATK? Do you understand this sentence? Chances are our kids do. Parents should monitor their children’s web use and become familiar with acronyms and abbreviations that the child may be receiving. For a searchable database of this Internet “lingo” visit: www.virtus.org/virtus/net_acronyms.cfm. By the way, the sentence states, “at the end of the day, are your kids always at the keyboard?”
- A webcam, when activated in conjunction with an online service, permits the user to transmit video images of people, including themselves. Webcams can be a source of convenience for some, but unfortunately it has been abused by child molesters who search the internet for unsuspecting children. Prior to connecting a webcam or microphone to a computer, discuss specific rules to protect the safety of all involved.
- Did you know that 37% of kidnap victims are minors between the ages of 12 and 14? Please keep your children’s safe and make sure that they are appropriately supervised. There have been students seen at the nearby eateries without any supervision.
- Did you know that 40% of kidnappings occur between the hours of 3 and 6 pm? Please make sure that you are aware of your children’s whereabouts and that the adults that are supposed to be supervising them actually are.
- Did you know that there are now more than 374,270 registered sex offenders in the US? California has the largest number of registered sex offenders of any state. To obtain information about registered sex offenders in your area, go to: <http://MegansLaw.ca.gov>.

- • The Archdiocese has mandated that all people who work with children and youth must undergo child abuse prevention training through the VIRTUS program. The training details five steps to prevent child sexual abuse:
 - 1) 1) Know the warning signs of an inappropriate relationship with a child
 - 2) 2) Control access to children by carefully selecting adults who work with children
 - 3) 3) Monitor all programs for the safety of children
 - 4) 4) Be aware of and sensitive to what is going on in the lives of your children
 - 5) 5) Communicate concerns to the appropriate person or authority.

- • When choosing a babysitter for your children, take time out to know more about the person. Know these people well and tell your children that “no secrets” may be kept at any time from anyone. This is a very powerful tool that continues to be used by perpetrators of abuse.

- • You can help keep your children safe by knowing where and whom they are spending their time. Get to know the adults and conduct “surprise” visits to those locations. Be wary of any adult who seems to single out a particular child. Warning signs may include treats, gifts, or special favors.

- • Teach children to say, “Stop it,” to instructions that might encourage them to do things they really don’t want to do. A discussion of these rules can teach a child that there are times when it is ok for them to do so and when they are not.

- • We can all create a safer environment for children by leaving our school and parish safer each day than when we started. This could be as simple as training ourselves to do a more effective job of keeping an eye on those around us and how they interact with children.

- • Be cognizant of people taking pictures with their cell phones. If you have a healthy suspicion of anyone using a cell phone in an awkward way, such as not holding it up to his or her ear or the cell phone facing the wrong way, don’t be afraid to bring it to their attention or alert someone in a position of authority and voice your concerns.

- • Parents and guardians play a key role in the success of programs for our children. Parents who are involved in parish programs and events will be in the best position to protect their own children as well as all the children in the community. Involvement and communication are important factors in helping to ensure a safe environment for our children.