

Roman Catholic Diocese of East Anglia



ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

Dignity

Most of us take for granted our right to safety and security and sacredness of our own personal space. When someone ignores that and uses it for their own ends, we feel that infringement and usually feel it deeply. When someone takes advantage of another in an abusive way, their personal privacy has been seriously invaded. If a child, young person or vulnerable adult is the victim, it is so much worse.

The diocese adopted the following policy statement recommended in A Programme for Action by Lord Nolan:

"The Church recognises the personal dignity and rights of children towards whom it has a special responsibility. The Church, and individual members of it, undertake to take all appropriate steps to maintain a safe environment for all and to practice fully and positively Christ's Ministry towards children, young people and vulnerable adults. The Church authorities will liaise closely with statutory agencies to ensure that any allegations of abuse are promptly and properly investigated and where appropriate, survivors supported and perpetrators held to account."

There are some basic principles of acceptable behaviour which will help us to achieve a safe environment and minimise situations where children, young people or vulnerable adults could be at risk.

Properly appointed adults must supervise children.

When caring for vulnerable adults, the government document 'No Secrets' provides guidance in relation to the main categories of abuse that are suffered, which will help in making decisions and determining our behaviour. The types of abuse are:

- Physical (ill treatment, failure to provide care)
- Psychological (humiliation, intimidation, indifference)
- Sexual
- Financial or material abuse (exploitation/ theft)
- Neglect (deliberate withholding of care/ support)
- Discriminatory (race, gender, age religion)

Abuse can either be deliberate, or the result of ignorance, lack of training, knowledge or understanding.

Acceptable behaviour is based upon respect of

- Dignity (individual's)
- Integrity (right to choose)
- Privacy (awareness of boundaries)



Roman Catholic Diocese of East Anglia



YOU MUST:

- Operate within the Church's principles and guidance and any particular procedures of the Diocese, Religious Congregation, Parish or Club.
- Treat everyone equally and with respect – show no favouritism. Avoid being drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour e.g. tantrums and crushes.
- Engage and interact appropriately with children, young people and vulnerable adults and allow them to talk about any concerns they may have. Physical contact must be both age appropriate and touch related to the person's needs, not the worker's.
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour and provide an example of good conduct you wish others to follow – an environment which allows bullying, inappropriate shouting or any form of discrimination is unacceptable.
- Respect the sacred dignity of every individual and their right to personal privacy.
- Recognise that particular care is required in moments when you are discussing sensitive issues or involved in caring for children, young people or vulnerable adults i.e. maintain appropriate boundaries.
- Avoid situations that compromise your relationship with children, young people or the vulnerable and are unacceptable within a relationship of trust. This rule should apply to all such behaviours, including those which would not constitute an illegal act. (Keep everything in public.)
- Ensure that a **minimum** of two leaders is always present, maintaining the gender balance of the group. In larger groups/ clubs the following supervision ratios should be adhered to:
 - 1 adult to every 3 children under 5
 - 1 adult to every 6 children aged 5-8
 - 1 adult to every 10-15 children aged 8 – 11
 - 1 adult to every 15-20 children aged over 11

YOU MUST NOT:

- Engage in inappropriate behaviour or contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults – physical, verbal or sexual. (Avoid any physical activity which is, or can be construed as, sexual, aggressive or threatening.)
- Discuss topics or use vocabulary with children and young people which could not be used comfortably in the presence of parents or another adult, whether writing, phoning, email or internet.
- Arrange an overnight trip with a child or young person without ensuring that another approved person will be present and that appropriate consent is in place.
- Take a chance when common sense suggests another more prudent approach.
- Physically, emotionally or sexually abuse or exploit (including financially) anyone.