

**Office for Child Protection
Catholic Social Services
2015-2016
Bulletin Points**

Please note: For your convenience, the bulletin points have been arranged by topic. To comply with our annual audit, we ask that each parish publish at least one bulletin point per quarter, and then send a copy of the bulletin to the Office for Child Protection. This helps to prove our compliance with the terms of the Dallas Charter.

Please contact the Office for Child Protection (508) 997-7337 or dberg@cssdioc.org if you have other suggestions for making this list more useful to you.

Thank you!

General Information

1. The Office for Child Protection is responsible for overseeing abuse response and reporting; counseling; prevention training and education; and compliance. If you would like to learn more about how the Diocese of Fall River is working to keep your children safe, please call Debora Berg, Safe Environment Coordinator, at (508) 997-7337.
2. If you or anyone you know has been a victim of sexual abuse by a Diocesan employee, please contact Arlene McNamee, Victim Assistance Coordinator, at (508) 674-4681.
3. The Office for Child Protection (OCP) of Catholic Social Services has a website with links to many wonderful resources for parents and caretakers. Please visit www.cssdioc.org/ocp and click on the Child Protection Resources link at the top of the page. If you have suggestions for additions or improvements, please contact Debora at (508) 997-7337.
4. Don't miss your child's events because you have an out of date CORI! Please check with your DRE to ensure that your CORI is current and that there is a training date on file for you. Without those two items, you'll be left behind.
5. If you need to attend an Abuse Prevention Training as approved by the Diocese, please contact your DRE. If there are no trainings taking place in your parish, please call Debora at (508) 997-7337 or see www.cssdioc.org for information on dates, times and the registration process.
6. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops created the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, revised in 2011. *The Charter* directs the creation of Safe Environment programs for children, as well as healing for victims/survivors of sexual abuse. If you would like more information about the *Charter*, please visit www.fallriverdiocese.org or call Debora Berg at (508) 997-7337.
7. If you would like more information about how the Diocese is responding to the crisis of sexual abuse, please visit our website at www.fallriverdiocese.org. It contains information on how to report an incident of abuse, Diocesan policies and procedures, and the Code of Conduct for all employees, clergy and volunteers.

8. The Commonwealth has issued a new CORI form. If you need to renew your CORI, please contact your parish DRE. Thank you!
9. The Diocese has a brand new Code of Conduct form, and our national auditors require that we all sign the new form when it is issued. You can review the form at www.fallriverdiocese.org. If you have questions, please call Debora at (508) 997-7337.

Victim Assistance/Safe Environment

10. The Diocese of Fall River remains committed to the process of healing for survivors of sexual abuse by any clergy member or Diocesan employee. The victim assistance coordinator is available to help survivors make a formal complaint of abuse to the diocese and to obtain supportive resources for the needs of the individuals and families. If you or anyone you know has been a victim of sexual abuse by a diocesan employee, please contact, Arlene McNamee, Victim Assistance Coordinator, at (508) 674-4681.
11. The Diocese of Fall River has a Environment programs in place in our parishes and schools to ensure the safety of all children as they participate in their daily activities. If you would like to know more, please contact the DRE or call Debora Berg at Catholic Social Services (508) 997-7337.
12. It is so important for parents and guardians to understand that despite our best efforts to protect children, there are some people out there who will take advantage of opportunities to mistreat minors. Please make sure your child attends Safe Environment lessons to learn how to be safe!
13. Safe Environment programs for adults require background checks, training, and codes of conduct for employees and volunteers who have contact with minors, as well as information for parents. If you would like more information about Safe Environment programs, please call Debora Berg at (508) 997-7337.

Boundaries

14. The Office for Child Protection would like to remind those in ministry with our children to maintain appropriate boundaries at all times, including physical, emotional, and social boundaries. If you would like more information about what types of interactions are appropriate, or how to deal with the discovery of inappropriate interactions, please call Debora Berg at (508) 997-7337.
15. Maintaining safe boundaries when working with children and clients is about more than just physical contact, or the lack thereof. It can be practiced in many ways, including not taking personal phone calls in front of children or not asking clients to do personal favors for you (or vice versa). For more information, please contact the Office for Child Protection at (508) 997-7337.
16. Many child abusers use grooming to break down the barriers between themselves and their intended victims. Grooming is the process of gradually creating an excessively close, intense, trusting relationship with a minor (and sometimes the minor's parents) for the adult's own purposes. If you would like more information about how to identify or report this type of behavior, please call Debora Berg at (508) 997-7337.

17. Think abuse can't happen in your area? Abusers are smart, charming people who know how to trick children and adults into thinking the abuser is a safe person. If you want to know the warning signs of someone who is preparing (grooming) a child for abuse, contact your DRE or the Office for Child Protection at (508) 997-7337.

Abuse/Sexual Abuse

18. Did you know that between 75% and 95% of abuse of young children is caused by someone who is close to the child? If your child reports a trusted friend or a relative, or shows a reluctance to be near that person, talk to your child! Never dismiss a concern because it's about a friend or relative. Listen to your child and take appropriate actions. For more information, contact your DRE or the Office for Child Protection at (508) 997-7337.
19. Have you ever seen someone you know do something around children that makes you feel uncomfortable? If so, trust your gut. Report what you saw and let professionals decide if there is anything to be concerned about. Tell your DRE or call the Office for Child Protection at (508) 997-7337.
20. When a child discloses abuse, especially sexual abuse, there are very specific ways to respond appropriately. Any other responses can cause a child to shut down, perhaps never to report again. If you are interested in learning more about what to do if/when a child discloses abuse to you, please contact the Office for Child Protection (506) 997-7337.
21. Abuse of children takes many forms, including physical, emotional and sexual. Knowing the signs of abuse and neglect can give you the information you need to help a child live a life free of abuse or neglect. For more information on the physical and emotional signs of abuse and neglect, please visit the Catholic Social Services website at www.cssdioc.org (Child Protection Resources section) or call Debora Berg at (508) 997-7337.
22. Did you know that there are many forms of sexual abuse? Sexual abuse occurs when an adult caretaker has *any* sexual contact with a child. If you know of any child being sexually abused, please call DCF. If you would like to learn more about what constitutes sexual abuse, please call Debora Berg at (508) 997-7337.
23. Did you know that there is no "typical" child abuse offender? They come every demographic. There is no easy way to spot an abuser, so parents must be aware of their children's activities and friends and be vigilant about personal safety. To learn more about how to keep your child safe, please call Debora Berg at (508) 997-7337.
24. Did you know that the majority of abusers of children are not strangers at all? Most of those who abuse young children (at least 75%) are known to the children, making the abuse even more confusing and traumatic for the child and the family. If you would like more information about how to protect your child, please call Debora Berg at (508) 997-7337.
25. Many of our diocesan communities have dealt with issues of registered sex offenders in the area or even living near the schools. There are sources of information about any registered sex offenders your neighborhood, as well information about what to do if you learn that a registered sex offender is nearby. For more information, please visit the Catholic Social Services website at www.cssdioc.org or call Debora Berg at (508) 997-7337.

26. There are many types of information available to parents and caretakers about sexual abuse as well as abuse in general. Some of this information is not suitable for young children, and is therefore kept in a secure location in the parish office. If you would like copies of any safety or prevention materials, please contact the parish office or the DRE.

Internet Safety

27. Did you know that sexual exploitation, abuse and other forms of child endangerment can be conducted via the Internet? Perpetrators often pretend to be the same age as the child and may even try to initiate an in-person meeting with your child. For information on how to keep your child safe, please call Debora Berg at (508) 997-7337 or email at djones@cssdioc.org.
28. Your child could be innocently posting photos on the Internet that could lead a perpetrator right to your door! Modern technology allows predators to locate children in any part of the country, if their photos are online. For more information on how to keep your child (and yourself) safe, please call the Office for Child Protection at (508) 997-7337.
29. Children can benefit greatly from some online programs, but they can also be targets of exploitation while on the Internet. Predators may use email, chat rooms, and social networking sites as a way to contact children and send them objectionable materials. If you would like a list of Internet resources, please call Debora Berg at (508) 997-7337.
30. POS, P911, LMIRL, GNOC, A/S/L/P—do you know what these mean? If not, you could be missing vital information even if you supervise your child's online and texting activities. For information on a guide to text and chat abbreviations, call Debora Berg at (508) 997-7337.
31. Child pornography is widely available now and is even found on the computers of children in the lower grades. If you find child pornography on any computer, DO NOT forward it to anyone. Doing so constitutes a felony offense that could land you in jail. If you do find anything questionable on any device, contact the proper authorities, who will help you address the problem in a safe way. Call your local police dept. or the Office for Child Protection at (508) 997-7337.
32. Online exploitation of minors is a serious problem. Approximately 1 in 5 children is solicited online. Please visit the Catholic Social Services website: www.cssdioc.org and go to the "Protecting God's Children" main page. There, you will find many resources for Internet safety and other topics. If you have questions, please call Debora Berg at (508) 997-7337.
33. Human trafficking is becoming a serious problem, even in the U.S. Every day, even in our area, children are solicited online and then forced into a life of sexual slavery. Be aware of what your children are doing online. Don't let your child become a victim! If you would like more information, contact the Office for Child Protection at (508) 997-7337.

Parenting

34. Want to keep your child extra safe? Create a code word for you and your child to be used in a variety of ways. It can be a signal that your child needs to talk to you immediately; it can be the password a trusted adult needs to pick up your child in an emergency; or it can

be a code to signal to you that the child is in danger. Practice handling these situations just as you would have family fire drills. Safety is too important to leave to chance!

35. Good communication and trust between parents and children are some of the strongest tools available to keep children safe from all kinds of harm. Make sure your child knows it's safe to talk to you about *any* topic, and then make the time to follow through. Actually being there for your child can result in the prevention of abuse or even suicide. If you would like more information, please call Debora Berg at (508) 997-7337.
36. Even as children become more social beings and visit friends' homes frequently, parental supervision is still crucial for child safety. Know where your child is at all times; know your child's friends and the friends' parents; and be familiar with the homes your child may visit. You are still the parent and still responsible for your child's well-being. For more information, contact the Office for Child Protection at (508) 997-7337.
37. Listen to your children! If a child feels uncomfortable around a relative or friend whom you trust, **do not** dismiss the concern. Ask your child about the reasons for the discomfort and no matter what you think about the adult, listen with an open mind. You might discover there was good reason for your child's concern! If you would like more information, please visit the Catholic Social Services website at www.cssdioc.org or call Debora Berg at (508) 997-7337.
38. Would you benefit from a quick guide to handling the challenges of parenting? An excellent resource is <http://www.kidsareworthit.com/Handouts.html>, where short handouts provide information on key topics for parents.
39. Good parenting means taking time for yourself, whether it's a date night, a weekend getaway, or treating yourself to something that is for you and not the kids. Taking care of yourself refreshes you to be a better parent! For more ideas on how to balance your needs with those of your entire family, contact the Office for Child Protection at (508) 997-7337 or see the resources at www.cssdioc.org. God bless you in the important work of parenting!

Children's Health Issues

40. Bullying is a common occurrence among children today and can have a serious impact on your child's physical and emotional health. The best protection that parents and caregivers can provide is education and intervention. Bullying is a form of violence and not a rite of passage! To learn more about how to prevent and/or address bullying, please call Debora Berg at (508) 997-7337.
41. Much of the bullying we hear about occurs online, so parents and caretakers should monitor Internet usage as well as behaviors. If your child is the victim or the perpetrator of bullying, the consequences can be dire. To learn more about how to prevent and/or address bullying, please call Debora Berg at (508) 997-7337.
42. Please remember that bullying is a learned behavior and is NOT about conflict between the victim and the bully. It's about the bully's utter contempt for another human being, so getting them to "make nice" will not work. If you have a child who is either the bully or the victim, or you would like to know more about bullying, please contact Debora Berg at (508) 997-7337.

43. If you fear that your child may be a victim of bullying via texting or cell phone messages, a good way to find out is to keep the child's cell phone in your bedroom for a night or two and recharge it there. You may be surprised at the texts or calls that come in during the wee hours of the morning. If so, you will certainly want to get help for your child to stop the bullying.
44. Schools in MA now have policies about bullying, including documentation and reporting of such incidents, as well as requirements for dealing with the situation. If you are unaware of the existing policies, please contact your child's school and be aware and prepared. You never know when you might need this information and it is also an excellent tool for talking with your child about bullying.
45. Did you know that children as young as age 9 are now committing suicide because of bullying? Please monitor changes in your child and check in frequently with your child, especially if you see a reluctance to go to school or other activities, changes in sleep, appetite, etc. Having an adult who cares is the best way to keep children from choosing suicide. For more information, please contact the Office for Child Protection at (508) 997-7337.
46. Substance abuse is a growing problem that can start as early as grade school. Warning signs can be sudden changes in behavior or moods, significant changes in eating or sleeping habits, and increased secrecy and hostility. If you believe that your child may be involved with drugs or alcohol, contact the school's social worker and/or your child's physician. Early detection and treatment are crucial to long-term physical and emotional health. For more information, please contact the Office for Child Protection at (508) 997-7337.
47. Are you aware of the dangers lurking in every convenience store? Synthetic drugs such as bath salts are not regulated, are often packed to look innocent, and can be sold to anyone. Even one dose of some drugs can cause brain damage and death. If you want more information, please contact the Office for Child Protection at (508) 997-7337.
48. Teen suicide remains a serious issue in our area and across the country. There are warning signs that can alert parents, caretakers, and professionals to the potential for suicide in any teen. If you would like more information on this topic, please call the Office for Child Protection at (508) 997-7337.
49. Don't let your child be a victim! Our children are subject to numerous societal pressures, such as being popular, being thin, taking drugs or alcohol, etc. Anorexia, bulimia, substance abuse, and bullying are all things that can rob your child of precious childhood years or even life itself. If your child is struggling with any of these issues, contact the Office for Child Protection (508) 997-7337 and see the resources available at www.cssdioc.org/OCP.