May 2015 *A quarterly newsletter of the Diocese of Trenton Risk Management Program*

Diocese of Trenton Risk Management Quarterly

Parishes, Schools, Cemeteries & Catholic Institutions

Summer Camps: Safety Issues

Is your parish hosting a day camp or vacation bible school this summer? If so, please read the following tips to ensure a safe and fun time for all.

Screen Applicants

The first step in planning your program is to find the right people. Whether hiring temporary workers or seeking volunteers, screen all applicants. Conduct an interview and ask the candidate for at least three references. Provide the candidate with a list of expectations and requirements for the job.

The Diocese of Trenton requires a criminal history background investigation for all staff and volunteers working with children, young people, and vulnerable adults. Because the background check may take weeks to complete, it is important to begin considering your staffing needs well in advance. When possible, utilize your current volunteers who have already completed the criminal background evaluation. Camp directors will annually complete a sex offender registry check for each staff member and the camp will comply with the requirements of New Jersey Youth Camp Standards N.J.A.C. 8:25, Revised 03/26/2015.

Safe Environment Training

Once accepted for the position, all staff and volunteers must complete the Protecting God's Children program and read and sign the Diocese of Trenton Code of Conduct for Employees and Volunteers. For more information on background investigations, safe environment training and the Code of Conduct, please go to: **http://www.dioceseoftrenton.org** Select the **About Us** tab and then select **Our Promise to Protect**.

Emergency Planning

When a program is held in a parish building other than a school, the pastor is responsible for developing emergency procedures, with assistance from his staff. Post procedures in a prominent place, along with emergency phone numbers and the directions to the nearest hospital emergency room. Require all staff/volunteers with cell phones to program the phone numbers for the local police and fire department into their phones.

At least two staff members or volunteers who are present onsite during the camp should be trained to administer CPR and epinephrine auto-injectors. In addition, if camps are located in or at schools, personnel are now required to have AED training: NJ Law A-1608 (Janet's Law).

Fire Safety

Conduct training in fire safety procedures and protocols. Be sure all staff/volunteers know what to do in the event of a fire and how to guide children, the elderly and the disabled to safety. Fire drills are a good opportunity to identify those who require extra assistance. Students with special needs should be assigned an individual to assist them. Always take daily attendance and, in the event of an evacuation, take the roster with you so that you may account for all students.

When a program operates in a building that is regularly used as a school, follow the school's existing fire protocols.

Allergies

Be sure you have a plan in place for children who are at serious risk when exposed to particular foods and/or allergenic substances. Be careful of the materials you use for crafts as food allergens can appear in non-dietary sources. Finger paint, for example, may contain wheat and milk. Empty egg cartons may contain traces of egg. To download a flyer with information about potential food allergens in school activities, go to **http://dotinsurance.org/lossprevention/resources**

Arrival / Dismissal

Provide parents with written instructions regarding parking procedures and the arrival and dismissal of children. If a child is released early, the individual picking up the child should be authorized by a parent or guardian to do so. Be sure to have authorization in writing. Staff should not transport children who are not their own to and from the camp in their personal vehicles.

Maintaining Facilities

Parish staff must maintain all walkways, stairs, entrances, exits and driveways. Periodically inspect these areas to be sure they are in good repair and free from debris.

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Electronic Media & Social Networking

For most of us, the use of electronic media has become an integral part of our lives. But if not used prudently, electronic media can pose significant risks to your operations.

Whether seen as a blessing or curse, electronic media is integral to the daily operations of every workplace and ministry in the Diocese of Trenton. It's almost hard to remember life before email and the Internet.

But with its ease of access, there is also the possibility that electronic media may be intentionally or inadvertently used in a way that could expose the Diocese of Trenton and your parish or school to significant liability.

Social networking, instant messaging and online shopping by employees are annoying, but they pale in comparison to the worst-case scenarios. What happens if someone harasses a co-worker on Facebook or reveals confidential information or engages in criminal activity? On-the-job or off, employees who lob careless comments into the electronic ether pose a risk.

For this reason, the Diocese of Trenton's Office of Communications, in conjunction with the Department of Catholic Schools and the diocesan Child Protection Team, is currently working on a social media policy to be used by all parishes and schools in the Diocese of Trenton.

Establishing an Electronic Media Policy

Please use the following guidelines as a base policy to protect the safety and privacy of others, limit liability, and preserve the good reputation of our institutions:

- Electronic mail, Internet access, computer drives, files and any other electronic media and equipment are tools provided by the organization to employees and volunteers for official business use only.
- Staff and volunteers should have no expectation of privacy with any of these systems. The organization has the right to monitor these electronic systems at any time, without notice.
- No staff member may access or attempt to access a co-worker's electronic communications without authorization.
- Email systems or social networks may not be used to solicit for political causes, commercial enterprises, outside organizations, or other non job-related purposes. All employees must make a distinction between their personal and official parish/school accounts.
- Staff members should practice electronic courtesy and conduct themselves in a professional manner. They should write email communications with the same care, judgment and responsibility that they would use for letters or internal memoranda.
- Incidental and occasional personal use of these systems is permitted, but subject to the same standards as business use.
- Staff members should not waste computer resources or unfairly monopolize resources to the exclusion of others. As such, these activities are forbidden: sending mass mailings or chain letters, playing games, engaging in online chats, streaming audio, printing multiple copies of documents, and web-surfing that is unrelated to the job. Audio, video and picture files require significant storage space and may not be downloaded unless they are job-related.
- The employer has the right to monitor any and all aspects of its computer system network, including websites visited by staff members, chats and news groups, material downloaded from or uploaded to the Internet, and email sent and received by others.
- Organizations may use software, such as firewalls and content filters, to identify and block inappropriate websites.
- Firewalls and content filters are not 100% effective. If a staff member encounters inappropriate or sexually explicit material while using the Internet at his or her workplace, he or she should immediately exit the site, regardless of whether the site was subject to blocking software. The staff member should report the issue to his or her supervisor.

Social Media

Social media includes the Internet and technology-based channels of communication in which people share content. Examples include social networks such as Facebook and Twitter, video-sharing sites such as YouTube and Vimeo, and blogs, such as the ones maintained by our various ministries.

Social media is a practical tool for communication and a valuable means of evangelization. Current and former Popes have recognized its tremendous reach and potential. Pope Francis currently maintains a Twitter account with over 5 million followers!

Diocesan entities that plan to use social media must establish goals, objectives and a list of roles and responsibilities that address privacy, permanency and interactions with minors.

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If you have any questions, comments or topic requests for future newsletters, please send an email to newsletter@dotinsurance.org

Summer Camps, *continued from page 1*

Use of Third-Party Vendors

If using third-party vendors, either to supply food or to provide entertainment, always obtain a contract and a Certificate of Insurance that names the parish/school, Pastor, the Diocese of Trenton, and Bishop David M. O'Connell as additional insured.

All third-party vendors must complete all requirements in regards to child protection, including criminal background checks, safe environment training, signed Code of Conduct and application with references.

In lieu of this, the company may supply a written statement that all those employed and working at your parish or school have these items on file with the parent company. All components must be met and copies must be provided, if asked. If any of the four requirements are not part of the company's own best practices, they must submit to the diocesan process.

General Precautions

- Children are less likely to drink fluids during play. Closely monitor children to ensure they take frequent water breaks. Require all children to bring their own water bottles. Avoid serving juice or carbonated and caffeinated drinks.
- Try to plan outdoor activities for the coolest parts of the day.
- Be sure staff/volunteers recognize the signs of heat illness. One of the first signs is muscle cramping, but be familiar with all the signs and symptoms. See the CDC website for more information: **http://www.cdc.gov/extremeheat/warning.html**
- Equip students with the proper gear for the games you are playing; make sure the gear is clean and in good condition.
- Know how to recognize the signs and symptoms of a concussion. If you suspect a concussion, seek medical help immediately. See the CDC website: **http://www.cdc.gov/headsup/resources/connect.html**

Hiring Youth

If hiring teenagers for camp, please be aware of NJ state labor laws. Some basic restrictions include the following: Youth under the age of 18 may not work more than eight hours per day, no more than six consecutive days in a row, and no more than 40 hours per week.

14 and 15-year-olds may not work between the hours of 7pm and 7am. However, from the period beginning on the last day of minor's school year, ending on Labor Day, minors may work until 9pm if a parent gives written permission. Youth under age 16 may not operate power machinery, such as power lawn mowers. Contact the NJ Department of Labor for more information.

Reporting Injuries

Immediately report any injury or accident. During business hours, claims should be reported to PMA Management Corporation at telephone: (800) 482-9826. ■

Social Media, *continued from page 2*

Use must comply with the established policy of the Information Technology and Communication Groups within the Diocese of Trenton to maintain the safety and security of all systems and protect all who use the social media interfaces.

Social Media and Minors

Use these guidelines to establish local policy for social media use by minors:

- There must not be private communication or messages between an adult and a child.
- No direct communication is allowed without including a parent in the conversation.
- Teachers/staff must use a separate, institutional email account, distinct from a personal account, in all communications with parents and students.
- No adult may initiate a conversation with a child younger than 13. An adult may respond to a minor who initiates a conversation only if the minor's parent or legal guardian has previously granted prior consent, in writing.
- Private messaging is forbidden. If a private message is unavoidable, print a transcript of the exchange.
- All communication with minors via blogs or social networks must be done in conjunction with a ministry program, such as a parish or school youth group.
- Teachers and catechists must not accept "friend" requests from, or initiate "friend" requests to a minor from a personal blog or social network account.
- Do not post pictures of minors on sites such as Facebook without the permission of a parent or legal guardian. Never "tag" minors in photos, or include information that makes them identifiable, including name, address or age.

The Internet Is Not Private

In short, if you wouldn't divulge information or express an opinion to a stranger you meet on the street, do not type it onto a website. Social networks rely on connections and communication, so they encourage users to provide some personal information, but be careful and prudent! And remember:

- The Internet provides a false sense of anonymity, privacy and security.
- People forget that information tailored for their friends is visible by many.
- "Insights" that may impress family, friends and associates may reveal more about the writer than intended.
- People with malicious intent may impersonate a trusted friend or use personal information about hobbies and itineraries to access or "phish" for other information and financial data.
- Use strong privacy settings and take advantage of the security options provided by social networks. The default settings for some sites may allow anyone to see your profile, but you can customize your settings to restrict access from people you do not know.
- Always think before you post. Will your post compromise someone else's privacy? Will you be embarrassed or humiliated if your mother, spouse, kids or boss connects you to the post? If in doubt, do not post.

Internet Postings Never, Ever Go Away

The Internet gives new meaning to the concept of eternity. In the moment something is published online, it is instantly available to other people and search engines. Even if you try to remove the page or post, someone may have saved a copy of it or used excerpts from another source. Some search engines "cache" copies of websites that are available after a site has been deleted or altered. Once something is out there, there is no guarantee that it can ever be completely removed.

Appropriate, Accountable and Relevant

If you do decide to publish a blog, website or page on a social network, make sure you have a plan for keeping the content relevant. The most effective blogs and websites are ones that have regular, consistent input and monitoring. Each blog, website or page on a social network should have a responsible administrator and a plan to refresh and monitor content.

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Roman Catholic Diocese of Trenton
Department of Administrative Services
701 Lawrenceville Road
Trenton, NJ 08638

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Appropriate Content and Accountability

If your institution maintains a website, blog or Facebook page, use these tips:

- Practice Christian charity at all times. Post only positive comments and content, consistent with the teachings of the Church.
- Ministry personnel must identify themselves by name when posting content; pseudonyms are not allowed.
- If a page has the comments feature enabled, at least two adults should be responsible for reviewing and responding to the comments on a daily basis. Be prepared to delete comments that may be inappropriate or offensive.
- The posting policy must be included somewhere on the page or site. Here is the suggested language:

  "(The Page Name) encourages comments, questions and healthy debate through this monitored online discussion board, requiring that all posts reflect the practice of Christian charity and respect. The (Page Name) will not remove comments simply because they are not in agreement with the Diocese of Trenton. However, comments may be deleted if they are inflammatory, disrespectful, slanderous, profane, uncivil, or deemed otherwise inappropriate. Discussion should take place primarily from a faith perspective, presuming the good will of other posters. This forum is not to be used to attack individuals or groups. Promotional advertising is not permitted. The (Page Name) representative reserves the right to remove any comments not deemed in compliance with this statement."

Diocesan Policy

These guidelines are designed to help you establish a policy for your parish, school or organization. A draft of the policy can be obtained by contacting the Communications Office at 609-403-7137. Once the policy is promulgated, it will be distributed to all parishes and schools.

Electronic media truly is a blessing, but we need to be prudent. Please establish a policy and educate your staff and volunteers on how to use this ever-changing technology in a manner that does not compromise the safety, privacy and dignity of ourselves and others. ■

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www.dotinsurance.org/forms/auto-forms

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