Relevant Topics Pertaining to Working with Minors

SAFE ENVIRONMENT

REGNUM CHRISTI

Bullying

- Bullying is an intentional aggressive behavior, repeated over time, and involves an imbalance of power or strength.
- Bullying can be:
  - Physical (hitting, pushing, pinching, restraining, etc.).
  - Verbal (belittling, name-calling, etc).
  - Relational (manipulation, gossip, intimidation, etc.).
  - Cyber (use of technology to threaten, post sensitive info/lies about others, pretend to be someone else to hurt another, etc.).
  - Sexualized (sexual jokes, sexting, sexual harassment, etc).
  - Hazing (humiliation, degradation, coercion, etc.).
- Bullying should not be confused with conflict, as that could downplay the situation and allow further harm to continue.
- A child may bully others for multiple reasons, such as learning from what is modeled at home with family members/on television, acting out for attention, or crying for help due to other concerns. After de-escalating the situation, you may ask the child more about their well-being and why they are acting out in this manner. If the child discloses a concerning reason, respond appropriately to provide support and assistance as needed. (Refer to Reporting Procedures Reference Guide if needed).

RC Activities Safe Environment Program Policies and Procedures (pages 6-7)

Negative Coping Strategies & Self-Harm

- You may encounter a child who is engaging in negative coping methods, such as self-harm, use of drugs and alcohol, sexual promiscuity, eating disorders, excessive behaviors not intended to be dangerous (social media use, exercise, gaming), etc.
- Self-harm is causing deliberate injury to oneself, most often by cutting, burning, scratching, pulling out hair, or punching. It may be hard to spot as it is mainly done on easily concealed areas of the body.
- If a minor in your care is in imminent danger, please call 9-1-1 and notify the parent/guardian.
- Negative coping strategies and self-harm may be symptomatic of:
  - Mental health concerns (depression, anxiety, etc).
  - Abuse or trauma.
  - Peer pressure/trend.
  - Feeling the need for a reminder that they are alive.
  - Communicating a need for help without verbally asking.
  - Identifying a personal characteristic they are struggling to understand.
  - Social isolation.
- It may be helpful to role model or provide alternative positive coping strategies, such as talking to someone, attending social events, hobbies, prayer, etc.
- Consult your Safe Environment office to determine if a mandated report is necessary.

How to Intervene

Everyone has the responsibility to intervene when they see evidence of bullying, negative coping, or self-harm.

Everyone should be aware of the behavior of those they are supervising, be able to identify bullying, negative coping, or self-harm, and respond appropriately.

- De-escalate the situation.
- Ensure the safety of all involved.
- Gather the facts to assess the situation:
  - (Bullying) Have each party and any witnesses write down what happened.
  - (Self-Harm) Discreetly speak with the minor about what concerned you in what you observed.
- Remain patient, calm, and empathetic.
- Inform your direct supervisor.
- Complete an Incident Report (you may need to also notify civil authorities depending on the incident).
- Notify the parents/guardians.
- Refer to appropriate support and resources and/or create an intervention/safety plan.
- Keep incidents confidential and do progress check-ins when appropriate.

Always remember to check with your local diocese's safe environment policies and follow the most strict guidelines.

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