

SAFEGUARD THE CHILDREN MEETING

February 21, 2024

Present: Colette, Dawn, Donella, Jeannie, Patricia, and Ray

Our meeting began with prayer.

There are a few “Protecting God’s Children” and “Keeping the Promise Alive” sessions, as well as, fingerprinting, scheduled.

Virtus®, PGC happened last night, Tuesday, Feb 20

Virtus®, KPA is scheduled for Sunday, Feb 25

Additional dates for April and/or May will be scheduled.

Patricia secured Livescan events, one each month through December, the two upcoming are:

- March 18, 12:00pm – 6:30pm
- April 24, 12:00pm – 6:30pm

We talked about the need to have more people involved in the teaching of the two Virtus programs.

Our conversation turned to third party vendors.

- There was a discussion about the legality of third-party vendors. Patricia will investigate whether it's feasible to have vendors sign a document ensuring that their workers undergo a livescan procedure. Certain vendors like those providing after school electives, Fair services and building maintenance companies were singled out for extra attention regarding background checks.
- We are not so concerned about the folks who drop off something like ChoiceLunch and pizza that are in and out in a matter of minutes.

Donella passed out a few forms from the AD

- *Child Abuse Acknowledgement Form* (Revised August 2021)
- *Safeguard the Children Committee Responsibilities and Best Practices* (Revised 2018)
- *Mandatory Reporting of Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a Current Minor in Three Steps.* (2021)

- Boundary Guidelines and Code of Conduct for Middle and High School Youth Working or Volunteering with Children/Youth. (2014)

The “Child Abuse Acknowledgement Form” (2021) is signed by the faculty and staff at Holy Family School, but the rest of the team was unfamiliar with the document.

“Safeguard the Children Committee Responsibilities and Best Practices” is meant to be a reminder to make sure we are in compliance and are managing our charge appropriately.

The next document, the “Mandatory Reporting of Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a Current Minor in Three Steps” reminds all reporters of the procedures necessary when making a report.

This document led to a question: Do reporters need to tell their supervisor/and or the pastor? The document suggests that it is not necessary, however, some of the team felt it was important. Some of the team pointed out that HF self-imposed guidelines exceed the guidelines prescribed by the AD. Colette agreed to explore the need to tell one’s supervisor/principal/pastor when making a report.

The last document, “Boundary Guidelines and Code of Conduct for Middle and High School Youth Working or Volunteering with Children/Youth”, was a refresher. Patricia reminded all of us that the guidelines form, both for minors and adults are subject to change and one needs, when asking their ministry to annually sign the guidelines, to get a current form found on the AD website. Jeannie, HFS VP, confirmed that she will double check with the school’s after school Drama Program, that HF Alum attending high school, who take part in helping Tharon, are completing this form. These forms are to be filed in the school front office.

Donella asked all of us to review all the distributed documents and bring up concerns, questions and the like at our next SGChildren meeting.

Dawn brought up an important issue regarding the transfer of information and compliance procedures within Holy Family, specifically related to ministry leadership transitions and the adherence to necessary paperwork and compliance standards.

To ensure a smooth transition of leadership and continuity of compliance standards, we suggested the following steps:

1. **Meeting with Ministry Leadership:** we proposes holding a meeting with ministry leadership in the fall to discuss the requirements for each ministry. This meeting would serve to clarify the level of compliance needed for each ministry, such as

signing guidelines, staying current with Virtus training, and completing Livescan background checks.

2. **Clarifying Compliance Levels:** Some ministries may require all three levels of compliance, while others may only need to adhere to signing guidelines. It's essential to establish clear guidelines for each ministry to avoid confusion and ensure consistency.
3. **Communication with Safeguard Record Keeper:** The leader of each ministry should share the compliance information with the safeguard record keeper, Patricia. This ensures that compliance records are accurately maintained and up-to-date.
4. **Addressing Lax Procedures:** Dawn highlights the need to address lax procedures that may have developed over the past few years. This could involve launching campaigns to reiterate compliance requirements and encourage participation to get everyone back on board.

By implementing these suggestions, we can strengthen compliance procedures, enhance communication among ministry leaders, and ensure continuity in maintaining necessary paperwork and compliance standards during leadership transitions.

Our next meeting is May 14, 2024 at 10:30am in the Mother Teresa Room.