

## **Sexual Abuse Prevention Statement - Handout High School Students**

The overwhelming majority of adults working with youth today are positive and faithful individuals, dedicated to helping our youth grow in the Catholic faith. Unfortunately, there have been cases where adults have behaved inappropriately and have even abused people entrusted to their care.

The Church believes in the dignity of the human person and recognizes abusive behavior as sinful. One victim of abuse is one too many. The Church seeks to restore any broken relationship. This is sometimes difficult.

The Archdiocese of Dubuque is sincerely committed to the spiritual and emotional well being of all by providing morally good, healthy, and informed leaders, thereby making the Church a place of safety and trust. The Archdiocese needs you to share in this responsibility of awareness and to seek help for yourselves or your friends if you are aware of any prior or present sexual abuse.

All children have the right to be safe and protected from harm in any and all environments - home, school, religious institutions, neighborhoods and communities. The Archdiocese of Dubuque embraces this right to safety and is dedicated to promoting and ensuring the protection of all children. The Archdiocese will do all in its power to create a safe environment for children and young people, to prevent their physical abuse, sexual abuse and neglect and to bring the healing ministry of the Archdiocese to bear wherever possible.

### **What is Child Abuse?**

Child abuse consists of any of the following:

a. Sexual Abuse includes any act or interaction, whether or not it involves genital or physical contact, with or without consent, even if initiated by the child, which involves sexual contact, molestation or sexual exploitation of a child by a parent or any other person who has permanent or temporary care or custody or responsibility for supervision of a child, whether physical injuries are sustained or not, to include:

1. The intentional touching of the genitals or intimate parts, including the female breast, the genital area, groin, inner thigh and buttocks of a child or of a perpetrator by a child for purposes of sexual arousal or gratification.
2. Rape, sexual intercourse (vaginal or anal), oral/genital, oral/anal contact.
3. The intentional touching and/or displaying of one's own genitals or intimate parts, including the female breast, the genital area, groin, inner thigh and buttocks in the presence and view of a child for purposes of sexual arousal or gratification.
4. Permitting, causing, encouraging or assisting in the depiction of or posing for viewing by any person, either in person or by way of graphic means, including digital or photographic image of the partial or fully unclothed body of a child, displaying intimate parts, in motion or not in motion, alone or with other persons, or the depiction of a child in apparent observation of sex acts by others in the child's presence.
5. Displaying or distributing to a child any picture, photograph, book, pamphlet, digital image, movie or magazine, the cover or content of which is principally made of descriptions, or

depictions of sex acts or contact, or which consists of pictures of nude or partially nude figures posed or presented in a manner which the average person applying contemporary community standards would find, taken as a whole, appeals to the prurient interest.

6. Anything otherwise deemed to be sexual abuse by the law of the State of Iowa.

b. Physical Abuse includes any act which:

1. Willfully causes or inflicts physical injury to a child;
2. Willfully causes mental injury or psychological injury to a child by intentionally engendering fear of physical injury to that child; or
3. Is otherwise deemed to be physical abuse by the laws of the State of Iowa.

Physical abuse does not include the appropriate physical restraint of a child who is attempting to injure another person or him/herself, or the appropriate physical direction of a child away from danger or the minimum restraint necessary to place a child in "time out" or other appropriate limitation of movement to promote the child's regaining of safety and emotional control.

### **What are Ways to Protect Yourself**

Take precautions to limit the possibility that you might be sexually abused. Keep the following points in mind:

1. Your body is your sacred domain. You have a right to decide how it will be touched and by whom. No one is ever free to force, pressure, or tease you into having sexual contact of any kind.
2. Trust your own feelings. If someone's conduct or attitude seems suspicious, or if you are confused, afraid, and uncomfortable, there may be a good reason.
3. Have a clear idea of your own sexual values, goals, and ideals. Be assertive in saying no if you feel you are being pushed or pressured.
4. Don't weaken your defenses with alcohol or any other substance.
5. Don't walk alone at night. Don't hitchhike or accept rides from strangers.
6. Immediately leave a room if someone is there you can't trust.
7. Don't be alone with a date in a potentially dangerous place like an empty house or a parked car.
8. Refuse single dates with someone you don't know well and never go on a date with someone who has the reputation of being sexually abusive or immoral.
9. Never accept a drink you have not poured and never set your drink down or leave it unattended. (Rapists today are using powerful drugs like Rohypnol and GHB - commonly called ruffies, roofies, and many other street names - to disable females. These drugs are slipped into a person's drink. As one teen said, "The last thing I remember about the party was this guy giving me a drink. I woke up seven hours later in his bed. I can't remember

anything in between.”

10. Avoid any situation you deem to be dangerous.

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### **What to Do if You or Someone You Know Has Been Sexually Abused?**

If you have been abused in the past and haven't ever talked about it, tell someone you trust, preferably a parent, teacher, counselor or youth minister. You may need professional help to cope with the abuse, to put it in perspective, and to move on to a healthier way of relating to the world.

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To report any and all child abuse, contact:

#### State

Department of Human Services

Website <http://www.dhs.state.ia.us/reportingchildabuse.asp>

Hotline: 1-800-362-2178

#### Archdiocese

**Victim Assistance Coordinators** - Facilitate access to appropriate professional mental health services, social service agencies, support groups and/or individuals who can provide spiritual care. Call toll free 800-803-6758 or 866-319-4636 to report an allegation or receive assistance.

#### State of Iowa - Mandatory Reporting

The state of Iowa has a mandatory reporting law. This means that people in certain professions must report child abuse. Mandatory reporters are:

- According to Iowa law, six classes of professionals must report suspected abuse within 24 hours from the time they notice the suspected abuse. Those professions are: health, mental health, education, law enforcement, child care and, social work. These people are required by Iowa law to complete a training course in mandatory reporting of abuse.
- A more detailed listing follows: health practitioner who examines, attends, counsels or treats a child (licensed physicians, surgeons, osteopaths, dentists, optometrists, podiatrists, residents or interns, PAs, nurses, basic and advanced EMS personnel, all social workers (private and public), psychologists, school employees, day care employees, staff of all health care facilities, staff of mental health centers, peace officers.