

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

YOUTH PROTECTION PROGRAM



**KNIGHTS
OF COLUMBUS**
IN SERVICE TO ONE. IN SERVICE TO ALL.

YOUTH PROTECTION PROGRAM

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INTRODUCTION

Knights of Columbus programs cover a vast array of activities, many of which involve children. In sponsoring youth programs, it is our highest priority to insure the safety of the young people entrusted to the care of the Knights of Columbus.

Safety involves many things, including fire prevention, water safety, safe driving, prevention of accidents of all kinds and the conditions that lead to them, emergency procedures, and first aid. All of these issues should be of concern in planning and conducting any Knights of Columbus sponsored youth program.

Beyond the natural and physical dangers young people can encounter, all too tragically, innocent young people must be protected from social dangers as well. Child abuse, including sexual abuse, is a reality. But it is a reality that we can deal with to lessen its occurrence and heal the pain. It is this issue that the Knights of Columbus **Youth Protection Program** is designed to address, not because it is any more dangerous than the other hazards mentioned above, but because it is one danger that is perhaps more hidden and least understood.

There are at least three ways you can help to protect young people associated with the Knights of Columbus programs from sexual and other forms of child abuse.

First, it goes without saying, is to never subject a child to sexual or other forms of abuse. As a Catholic and as a Knight, and simply as an ordinary human being, you know this instinctively, and would never even consider engaging in such behavior. But meeting this minimal standard is not enough.

Relations between all adults and children involved in K of C activities should **avoid even the appearance of any impropriety.** That is, you should conduct yourself at all times in a manner that protects both you and the children in your care from any unfounded accusations. Reputations – yours, a child's, and the Knights of Columbus' – are important, and are built on trust, openness and transparency. By following simple procedures built upon these fundamentals, no one will ever have cause to doubt that the Knights youth programs conform to the highest ethical and moral standards of conduct.

Secondly, Knights should not only act in the most honorable and respectful manner toward children, they should act as the child's protector, by being alert at all times to any type of inappropriate activity that may be directed at a child by others. Each program activity should be designed to assure that every child is protected against harmful influences. Moreover, everyone working with youth should be aware of the signs that indicate if a child is being subjected somewhere else in his or her life to abusive behavior, so that appropriate action can be taken to stop it. This is where self-education comes in.

Third, you can help to educate others – parents, members of your community, and young people themselves, in how to avoid, identify, stop and report sexual and other forms of child abuse. Parental permission should first be obtained and great sensitivity should be used in deciding what material to use and how to present it to young people in various age groups.

This pamphlet has been developed to help you achieve these objectives.

PART 1 – PROCEDURES FOR KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS “YOUTH LEADERS”

A. APPOINTMENT OF “YOUTH LEADERS”

Procedures must be implemented and enforced by every council and assembly that sponsors a youth program, and by every volunteer presently serving or desiring to serve as a Knights of Columbus “Youth Leader” to insure that every young person is protected in Knights of Columbus youth programs.

A “Youth Leader” is a Knight, or another adult, who has a substantial and sustained relationship with youth through a council sponsored youth group, such as a Squires counselor or a leader in a Knights of Columbus sponsored Boy Scout troop. Candidates for any “Youth Leader” position are required to apply by completing a background check application.

A priest serving in a “Youth Leader” position is exempt from submitting a background check application. Instead, the Ordinary of the priest’s diocese will be notified by the Supreme Council office of the priest’s appointment to a “Youth Leader” position for his consideration and review.

- 1) Every candidate for the position of “Youth Leader” in a Squires circle or Scout unit must complete a “Youth Leader” Application (Form #4348). “Youth Leader” Application forms are available on the Knights of Columbus web site at www.kofc.org and also in the Report Forms Booklets that have been provided to every grand knight, faithful navigator and chief counselor. The application must be completed, with the names of at least two non-related persons as references, and submitted to the grand knight or faithful navigator, who, if he approves, signs and forwards it to the Supreme Advocate. After a background check has been done, the Supreme Advocate’s office will decide whether to approve or reject the application.

Nominees for State Council “Youth Leader” appointments, such as state squires chairman or state squires committeeman, should complete the “State Council Youth Leader” Application (Form #4369). “State Council Youth Leader” Applications should be obtained from the state deputy or the Department of Fraternal Services.

- 2) The sponsoring council or assembly bears the responsibility for obtaining the completed application and for checking the two named references and insuring the suitability of the applicant.
- 3) Every candidate for the position of “Youth Leader” must sign the “Youth Leader” Application (Form #4348 or #4369) authorizing a background check, which will include motor vehicle violations as well as criminal arrests and/or convictions. Applications ask for personal information, references and permission to conduct a criminal background and driving record check. The check of applicants in the United States, Canada and Mexico will be conducted through the Office of the Supreme Advocate. In the Philippines, background checks of applicants shall be conducted by the deputy of the respective Philippine jurisdictions.

A criminal arrest for sexual or child abuse charges will be given great weight in the evaluation process. Except where the charges resulted in a finding of “Not Guilty” after a trial, any record of arrest on such charges shall be grounds for automatic disqualification.

Only a Knight or other adult whose record reveals no significant problem areas will be appointed to a "Youth Leader" position. Long term "Youth Leaders" will be required to reapply every three years and to pass current criminal background checks to be renewed as "Youth Leaders."

B. TRAINING OF "YOUTH LEADERS"

Local Knights of Columbus councils and assemblies and Squires circles are encouraged to establish programs for training fellow Knights, Squires, parents and others within the community, in order to educate these individuals as to how to prevent, identify and report child abuse.

- 1) All successful candidates shall become familiar with the material in this pamphlet to enable them to avoid even the appearance of any impropriety with youth program participants ("youth participant").
- 2) Your state deputy should be familiar with relevant federal, state, or provincial statutes and diocesan regulations regarding working with children and reporting of alleged sexual abuse. The state deputy, state advocate, state youth director and state squires chairman should be helpful in providing the relevant information.

C. "YOUTH LEADER" PRACTICES

- 1) A "Youth Leader," whenever possible, should have another adult person present when he is with a youth participant. A youth participant should never be left alone with a "Youth Leader." If available, two "Youth Leaders" or a "Youth Leader" and a second adult should be involved in all youth activities.
- 2) All youth activities* must be open to parents or guardians.
**For purposes of the above paragraphs, "activities" means all youth programs other than Squires ceremonials and meetings.*
- 3) On overnight activities, youth participants may never share a tent, cabin, room, or other sleeping area alone with a "Youth Leader." A youth participant should room only with other youth participants or with his parent.
- 4) The privacy of youth participants while sleeping, changing, showering, and in rest room areas, must be respected at all times.
- 5) "Youth Leaders" should refrain from abusive behavior of any kind, whether verbal, physical or sexual.
- 6) Youth participants are prohibited from having members of the opposite sex, other than family members, in their room, tent, cabin or other sleeping area at any time.
- 7) On overnight activities, curfews should be observed with a bed check of male (female) rooms conducted by two "Youth Leaders," a "Youth Leader" and a parent, or two parents, both male, or both female, as appropriate.

- 8) Parental release forms must be obtained for each youth program activity held away from the program's regular meeting place. The release forms should indicate which two adults would be riding with the youth participants and who would be driving. Only approved "Youth Leaders" shall be permitted to drive.

D. EDUCATION OF YOUTH PARTICIPANTS

- 1) The youth participant should be given training and education as to the manner and procedures for reporting promptly any conduct involving alleged sexual or other forms of child abuse. This training should include the making available to parents and guardians information and materials dealing with unwanted physical contact and to whom reports should be made. The training should also provide assurances of confidentiality to whatever extent possible, and protection from retribution.

Youth participants should be informed that any unwanted physical contact should be reported to the "Youth Leader," grand knight, faithful navigator, local pastor, or their parents. The person so informed should immediately advise the state deputy of such allegations, who in turn should notify the Office of the Supreme Advocate, and, where appropriate, the district master.

- 2) Councils and assemblies should make materials on these topics available to parents or guardians of the youth participants. One source on the Internet for ordering printed materials is the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children at www.missingkids.com.

E. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

- 1) Suspected cases of alleged sexual or other forms of child abuse against a youth participant by "Youth Leaders," other youth participants, adult personnel, or any other person associated with a Knights of Columbus Youth Program, should be immediately reported to:
 - civil authorities
 - the district deputy in charge of that person's council or the master in charge of the assembly, who should report the matter to the state deputy.
- 2) If the charge is against a "Youth Leader" who is a member of the Order, or other member of the Order, the state deputy, or the district deputy with the approval of the state deputy, or of the territorial deputy, of the individual's subordinate council should summarily suspend that member from the Order. Charges, where appropriate after investigation, should be brought against the member. Every allegation should be forwarded promptly by the district deputy or master to the state deputy and the Office of the Supreme Advocate. The Charter, Constitution and Laws of the Order relating to the bringing of charges, trial, appeal and reinstatement shall apply.
- 3) **THE COUNCIL OR ASSEMBLY SHOULD REFER THE ALLEGED VICTIM AND HIS OR HER FAMILY TO RESOURCES THAT WILL AID IN THE CARE OF THE VICTIM AND HIS OR HER FAMILY.**

PART 2 - EDUCATION

A. WHAT IS SEXUAL ABUSE OF CHILDREN?

The following non-touching and touching behaviors with children should be avoided:

NON-TOUCHING

- inappropriate speech – sexual innuendo, vulgar or obscene language, sexually graphic jokes, stories, etc.
- pornography – immodest, sexually graphic or obscene printed images, photographs or text, videos, video games, CD's, DVD's, movies, TV shows, web pages, song lyrics, etc.
- voyeurism (Peeping Tom)
- exhibitionism/indecent exposure
- child pornography – pornography featuring children under the age of 18

TOUCHING

- unwanted or forced displays of affection
- inappropriate touching
- sexual relations with a child

Statutes in each state, province or federal jurisdiction, may differ substantially concerning the legality of the above activities, who must report them, and to whom a report of sexual or other forms of child abuse must be made.

Whether illegal or not, or required to be reported to civil authorities or not, the activities mentioned above are prohibited in Knights of Columbus activities.

Sexual exploitation should not be confused with physical contacts that are true expressions of affection.

B. GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT SEXUAL ABUSE

- Sexual abuse of children is a serious criminal offense.
- There were 80,000 reports of child sexual abuse in the United States in one year. In Canada, there were 12,000 investigations of sexual abuse of children in one year. Sexual abuse was substantiated in 29% of those cases, and abuse was suspected in an additional 27% of the cases.
- 1 in 5 girls and 1 in 7 boys are abused sexually before the age of 18.
- 90% of victims of sexual abuse know their abusers – parents, family members, other relatives, friends of the parents, other caretakers, or friends or acquaintances of the youth.
- 38% of abusers who were returned to the streets abused again – though some programs have reduced the rate of recidivism following treatment to 6%.

- Some offenders know what they are doing is wrong and want to stop, but don't know where to turn for help and are embarrassed and afraid to ask.

C. TIPS FOR KIDS

- Do not hitchhike, get into a car or go anywhere with any person unless you know the person and your parents have told you it is OK.
- If anyone asks you to keep a special secret, tell your parents.

D. TIPS FOR TEENS ONLINE

- Don't disclose personal information about yourself or your family.
- Never agree to meet anyone from online.
- Avoid bulletin boards, chat rooms and blogs that are suggestive, obscene, threatening or make you uncomfortable.
- Not everyone on the internet is who they say they are. Someone who says she is a 13-year-old girl in another state may actually be a 45-year-old ex-convict down the street, or, "she" may be a police detective working undercover.
- Sale of pornography to anyone underage is illegal.
- Sale, purchase, or even possession, of child pornography, by anyone, is illegal.
- Report to your internet service provider any harassing or inappropriate activity.
- Report transmission of child pornography to the NCMEC at 1-800-843-5678 or to your local police.

E. STEPS PARENTS CAN TAKE TO HELP PROTECT THEIR CHILDREN FROM SEXUAL OR OTHER FORMS OF CHILD ABUSE

- Know where your children are, who their friends are, and meet their friends' parents.
- Be sensitive to changes in your child's behavior. Talk about what may have caused the changes.
- Be alert to a person paying an unusual amount of attention to your child or giving inappropriate or expensive gifts.
- Teach your children to trust their feelings and that they have the right to say "no."
- Listen to your children's fears.
- Teach your children that no one should touch them in their private parts – areas covered by a bathing suit – or in ways that make them feel uncomfortable. If someone does, they should tell someone in authority immediately.
- Be careful about babysitters or others who have custody of your children.
- Check online for your state's "Meghan's Law" type listings of convicted sex offenders released into the community.

F. ADULTS SUPERVISING CHILDREN AND TEENS

Being in sensitive situations requires adults to take precautions to avoid unfounded accusations:

- Protect your own privacy.
- An adult, other than a parent, should not sleep in the same room, tent, cabin, etc. with a youth.

- Always have another person, preferably another adult, present whenever you are supervising a child.
- Have other staff present when doing room checks, supervising showers, changing rooms, bathrooms, etc. on away and overnight trips.
- When counseling a child or youth, be in the same room with others, or in a room with windows, a room with a door with windows, or other location in which you and the youth are visible to others.
- Younger children require more supervision – provide adequate adult to child/youth ratio.

G. SIGNS OF SEXUAL OR OTHER FORMS OF ABUSE OF CHILDREN

Be aware of signs of sexual exploitation in case a child does not disclose exploitation on his or her own, such as:

- Changes in toilet training habits
- Older child acting like a younger child or infant, thumb sucking, clinging
- Nightmares, fear of going to bed, or other sleep disturbances such as bedwetting
- Extreme fear of monsters
- A fear of certain places, people or activities – especially being alone with certain people – be alert to signs a child is trying to avoid someone and listen carefully when a child tells how he or she feels about someone
- Loss of appetite or trouble eating or swallowing
- Stomach illness all of the time with no identifiable cause
- Talking about a new older friend
- Refusing to talk about a secret with an adult or older child
- Inappropriate sexual activity, an unusual interest in sexual matters, or a knowledge of sexual matters beyond the child's years
- New words for private body parts
- Sexual activity with toys or other children or asking other children to behave sexually
- School problems, behavior problems
- Behavioral changes, extreme mood swings, withdrawal, fearfulness, excessive crying
- A sudden acting out of feelings or aggressive or rebellious behavior
- Spacing out at times
- Cutting or burning self as adolescent
- Suddenly having money
- Bruises, rashes, cuts, limping, multiple or unexplained injuries
- Pain, itching, bleeding, fluid, or rawness in the private areas

H. IF A CHILD DISCLOSES SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

- Don't panic or overreact
- Don't blame the child.
- Don't criticize the child or claim the child misunderstood what happened.
- Do tell the child it's OK to tell an adult what happened.
- Let the child know you believe what they are saying – children seldom lie about sexual exploitation.
- Support the child and their decision to tell.
- Let the child know they can continue to confide in you.

- Show physical affection and express love and confidence with words and gestures.
- Avoid repeated interviews about the incident.
- If the child may have been injured, seek medical attention.
- Consider need for counseling or therapy.
- Alert both child protection services and a law enforcement agency.
- Do respect the child’s privacy. Tell only child protective services, law enforcement personnel, and the district deputy or master, as appropriate, who will alert the state deputy and Office of the Supreme Advocate.

PART 3 – REPORTING

A. REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

- Most parents and youth supervisors are not trained to make judgments about whether a child has been a victim – each state has agencies required to examine reports of suspected child abuse and to handle those cases.
- If you suspect or receive a report of child abuse – report it to the child protective agency in your state or province.
- Some states require you to report, regardless of where the abuse may have occurred or by whom.

Knights of Columbus “Youth Leaders” who receive reports or observe signs of suspected child abuse must report them to the district deputy or master, as appropriate, who will report to the state deputy and through him to the Office of the Supreme Advocate. The Knights of Columbus “Youth Leader” should also report to the civil authorities – to both the child protection agency and the local law enforcement agency.

B. TOLL-FREE HOTLINE FOR REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

The number for the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children in the United States and Canada is 1-800-843-5678. The toll-free number from Mexico is 001-800-843-5678. The CyberTipline for online reporting worldwide is www.cybertipline.com.

YOUTH LEADER

APPLICATION

PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT IN CAPITAL LETTERS
 IF MORE SPACE IS NEEDED, USE AND ATTACH AN ADDITIONAL PAGE

By my signature below I hereby authorize a background check of my fitness to be appointed as a youth leader in my council/assembly. In addition, in the event that I am appointed as a youth leader, I agree that the Order may conduct future background checks should they find it necessary or desirable to do so. I agree to hold harmless the Knights of Columbus and any organization that provides information concerning me.

Jurisdiction _____ Council # _____ Assembly # _____ Circle # _____
 (State/Province)

Position applied for: Columbian Squires: Chief Counselor Committee Counselor Squires Advancement Counselor
 Boy Scout Leader: Unit# _____ Pack Troop Team Post Ship
 Other (specify position): _____

# YEARS A YOUTH LEADER	MEMBERSHIP #	LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	INITIAL
RESIDENCE TELEPHONE #	BUSINESS TELEPHONE #	FAX	SOCIAL SECURITY #/TAX ID	DATE OF BIRTH / /
E-MAIL ADDRESS				

Current driver's license #: _____ State/province where issued: _____

Previous driver's license #: _____ State/province where issued: _____

Current Address:	City	State/Province	Zip/Postal Code	Dates
Previous street addresses since 18th birthday:*				

Current Employer:	City	State/Province	Zip/Postal Code	Dates
Previous Employers (last 5 years):				

Current Employer:	City	State/Province	Zip/Postal Code	Dates
Previous Employers (last 5 years):				

Current Employer:	City	State/Province	Zip/Postal Code	Dates
Previous Employers (last 5 years):				

High Schools attended:	City, State/Province of residence while attending

Colleges/Universities/Graduate Schools attended:	City, State/Province of residence while attending

*use additional sheet if necessary

Military Experience:	City/State/Country of duty residence	Dates

Experience working with youth in other organizations:

Current memberships (religious, community, business, labor, or professional organizations):

References. Please list those who are familiar with your character as it relates to working with youth. References will be checked when necessary.

Name: _____ Telephone _____

Name: _____ Telephone _____

APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE DATE

Note: The "Social Security #," "Date of Birth," complete residence addresses, and locations of employers and schools must be provided, and the applicant must sign the form, or the form will be returned.

For state and local council use:

We recommend appointment of the above applicant to serve as a youth leader in his council/assembly and hereby appoint him for the term indicated.

Grand Knight/Faithful Navigator Date State Deputy Date

Important processing instructions:

Once completed, the applicant should give the form to the grand knight or faithful navigator. After the grand knight or faithful navigator, or his designee, checks the references listed and is satisfied the candidate is suitable for appointment, he should sign the form and forward it to the state deputy for his signature and subsequent forwarding to the Office of the Supreme Advocate. Upon approval of the supreme advocate, a certificate will be sent to the applicant confirming his appointment. Approval is good for up to three years from the date on the certificate.