



Inservice of Catholic School Students

ALL students, Preschool – Grade 12, are to be inserviced annually for Child Protection. This inservicing is to be completed by the end of April each year.

Please email the scheduled inservice dates for Catholic school students by October 15th of each catechetical year to childprotection@eriercd.org

Rationale for Annual Inservicing

Teaching children and youth skills and strategies to protect themselves is a critical task and one that necessitates awareness of proven educational techniques. It is a well-known fact that repetition improves learning. There is also evidence that learning usually proceeds gradually. For instance, a cardinal rule of thumb in advertising is that potential customers usually need to see the name of a product seven times or more before they're motivated enough to even think about making a purchase.

There is evidence to suggest that if children and youth are presented with age-appropriate information regarding safe environment and protection, they become more comfortable discussing such issues. Some are even proud of knowing the material offered in our programs. Comfort and pride help empower children to protect themselves and/or report incidences of abuse.

The USCCB has indicated that the mandated child protection inservicing of children and youth has resulted in more children coming forward to report cases of inappropriate behavior on the part of adults. More importantly, the children coming forward no longer feel a sense of shame about incidents; they know that the abuse was not their fault.

With this information and experience in mind, the diocese requires that all children and youth be presented age-appropriate inservice programs each year.

Inservicing Agencies

The county service agency that will do this inservicing for you (at no charge) is listed on the diocesan web page at <http://www.eriercd.org/pdf/county.pdf> Even though these agencies do not charge for their services, it would be appropriate and much appreciated by the agency if schools are able to make a small donation to cover the cost of their handout materials and travel.

Process for Inservicing and Parental Option Forms

1. Contact your local county agency.
2. Advise all parents at least a week before the actual inservice date that inservicing will be conducted. Advise parents who do not want their child to participate in the program to call the school office so the child may be excused from the inservice the day it is presented.

3. The parent(s) of any child who is absent or whose parents have refused the child's participation in the on-site inservice must receive the diocesan *Parent Training Packet* along with a *Parental Option Form*. Ask parent(s) to return the completed option form. Inservicing **MUST** be offered on site; inservicing all students by solely sending the *Parent Training Packet* home is **NOT PERMITTED**.

Forms listing "refusal" as the reason for the child's absence are to be sent to the diocese with the *Annual School Report for Child Protection Compliance* which is due in June.

Information and Forms

The information and forms needed for compliance are on the diocesan web page at <http://www.eriecd.org> Please select ***For the Protection of Children*** from the list of boxes on the left hand side of the page. Scroll down and access information from the Child Protection web page information/forms needed.

Documentation

The school must have documentation to show that the school was not negligent in providing each and every student with safe environment inservicing, as evidenced by one of the following:

1. Record of attendance at a Safe Environment inservice.
OR
2. The date that training information was given to parents and the Signed *Parental Option Form*.

The *Child Protection Student Inservice Record – Catholic School* is an **OPTIONAL** form to use if desired. If the **same information** can more easily be generated using a computer program, that is acceptable. As long as the necessary documentation can be produced and information submitted on the *Annual School Report for Child Protection Compliance*, the format of the form is not critical. These forms or records are to be kept on-site at the school and not sent to the diocese. This documentation is to be kept confidentially and indefinitely.

Schools will receive a form, the *Annual School Report for Child Protection Compliance*, in the spring of the year. For this audit, schools will be asked to submit the following statistics regarding student inservicing:

1. Total number of students enrolled, Preschool - Grade 12
2. Number of students inserviced on site.
3. Number of students not inserviced on site and inserviced by parents.

Copies of *Parental Option Forms* listing "refusal" as the reason for absence must be submitted to the diocese with the *Annual School Report for Child Protection Compliance*.

It is expected that the numbers of students listed in #2 and #3 would equal the total of students listed in #1.