

Safe Environment information for Parents-Grade 5

Dear Parents,

The safety of your children is always uppermost in your mind. We have taken many additional steps in recent years to do our part in ensuring that your children will be in a safe place when they are participating in a program in our parish or school. All of our staff and volunteers have received the required background checks and training. We are implementing a program to help your children recognize the steps they can take to keep themselves safe. Lesson plans have been prepared for different age groups among the students. We are also providing an information sheet for you that may help you with matters that can affect your own children. As children grow, it is helpful to review the information provided there and apply it to the new set of circumstances that children face in these pre-teen and early teenage years.

You are encouraged to spend some time reviewing this information yourself, and then sitting down with your children. Each of the "rules" noted contains some application to common sense safety tips that you may share with your children. Other parts of the "rule" apply to some of the decisions that you make as parents for the safety of your children. A question and answer segment provides some suggestions on how you can best address these concerns with your children. Our goal is to equip both you and your children with the knowledge that can help to keep them safe.

For young people, friendships outside the home are very important. Parents should know who their child's friends are, and where they spend their time. Especially note if your child is "hanging around" with students who are several years older. This is always a red flag for parents. Media influences are very much a part of the cultural formation that young people receive. Monitor movies, books, and especially computer use. Computers with Internet access should be in a "public" area of the home under the watchful eye of parents. Children alone on the computer can be susceptible to the activity of strangers via chat rooms. We strongly discourage single dating for young people; that should be put off until late in the high school years. Mixed group activities are best for children in the middle school and early high school grades.

The basic point is that parents need to be involved with their children. The more you know about the daily events of your children's lives, the better you are able to spot any danger signs that may surface. The more regular your communication with your children, the more free they are to come to you with their concerns.

May our Lord bless you and your family.

Sincerely yours,