



REGISTERED SEX OFFENDERS AND PREDATORS POLICY
For
Diocesan Parishes and Schools

Florida Statutes Title XLVI, Crimes § 775.21. The Florida Sexual Predators Act provides a community notification system whereby certain information about a registered sex offender is released to criminal justice agencies and the general public in order to assist in protecting public safety. The act also gives grounds for the types of sexual crimes and penalties for these offenses. There are two criminal designations, sexual offender and sexual predator, with the predator designation intended to reflect a higher risk individual. This policy applies equally to both designations.

The Catholic Church also has laws, policies, and guidelines regarding the sexual abuse of minors. In the United States, the Church's laws on sexual abuse of a minor must also comply with the pertinent civil laws of the given jurisdiction. To comply with both the civil laws and the Church laws pertaining to the protection of children and young people, the Diocese of St. Augustine has issued a *Registered Sex Offenders and Predators Policy for Diocesan Parishes and Schools*. The policy is not meant to isolate or discriminate against any individual; it is intended to put in place protective boundaries within our parishes and schools to create a safe environment for all children.

I. In the Parish Setting

When an offender/predator is made known to parish leadership, the pastor of the parish must ensure the following requirements are followed:

A. Limitations

1. An offender/predator is not eligible to hold an employee or volunteer position at a parish.
2. The offender/predator must seek permission from the pastor for any involvement in adult-only parish life groups and must select an adult chaperone, who is known and approved by the pastor, to accompany him/her at all times.
3. The offender/predator is not permitted to be alone on parish property except for the express purposes of attending scheduled public liturgies and sacraments.
4. The offender/predator shall notify the pastor or administrator within twenty-four (24) hours of being contacted by any law enforcement officer concerning any new sexually-related charges or offense.

B. Supervision

1. The approved chaperone must be known, and approved, by the pastor.
2. The chaperone must be a background-cleared volunteer.
3. The chaperone must sign a written document agreeing to follow the requirements of this policy.
4. If the approved chaperone is not available in a given situation, the pastor may identify and approve a temporary chaperone to accompany the offender/predator for a single occasion.
5. The pastor may ask the offender/predator to sit in a specific location in the church for monitoring purposes.
6. The offender/predator must avoid sitting next to an unrelated minor child.

C. Notification

1. The pastor of the parish reserves the right to notify selected parish staff and volunteers, on a need-to-know basis, of the identity of the offender/predator and the approved chaperone, in order to ensure compliance with this policy.
2. The pastor of the parish reserves the right to notify all parents of minors in the parish to ensure they are aware of the offender/predators' background.

II. As School Parents

When an offender/predator enrolls his/her child/children in a Catholic school within the Diocese of St. Augustine, the school principal shall ensure the following requirements are followed:

A. Limitations

1. An offender/predator is not eligible to be an employee or volunteer at a diocesan school.
2. An offender/predator is not permitted on school grounds while children are present, nor is the offender/predator permitted to participate in school programs or school related events, whether on school property or elsewhere that include minors.
3. An offender/predator is permitted to be on school property to drop off and pick up his/her own child/children, with the following conditions:
 - a. May not be present on campus for any period of time longer than that which is reasonably required to perform this task.
 - b. Must remain in his/her vehicle at all times.
 - c. Is not permitted to drop off or pick up any child/children other than his/her own.
4. With the express prior written permission of the principal, an offender/predator parent may be permitted to attend a specific school event that directly involves his/her own child with the following condition:
 - a. Permission may be granted by the principal only after having first obtained the approval of the Superintendent of Schools.

- b. The offender/predator must select an adult chaperone who is known to and approved by the principal. The approved chaperone must accompany the offender/predator at all times while present on school property.
 - c. The offender/predator may only be present on school property for the specific event for which he/she is granted permission.
 5. When an offender/predator wishes to communicate with his/her child's teacher or school administrators, he/she may only do so by phone, regular mail, email, or by making an appointment to meet when school is not in session and schoolchildren are not present. The offender/predator must receive written approval from the principal in advance for any such appointment, including parent-teacher conferences.
 6. The offender/predator shall notify the principal within twenty-four (24) hours of being contacted by any law enforcement officer concerning any new sexually-related charges or offenses.
 7. If the offender/predator fails to abide by any of the above limitations or any part of this policy, he/she may be precluded from entering onto school property altogether.
- B. Supervision
 1. The approved chaperone must be known and approved by the principal.
 2. The chaperone must be a background-cleared volunteer.
 3. The chaperone must sign a written document agreeing to follow the requirements of this policy.
 4. If the approved chaperone is not available in a given situation, the principal may identify and approve a temporary chaperone to accompany the offender/predator for a single occasion.
 5. If the offender/predator is given permission to attend a specific school event accompanied by the approved chaperone, he/she may be asked by the principal to be in a specific location wherever the school event is taking place for monitoring purposes. The offender/predator must avoid contact with unrelated minors.
- C. Notifications
 1. The principal of the school reserves the right to notify selected school faculty or staff, on a need-to-know basis, of the identity of the offender/predator and the approved chaperone, in order to ensure compliance with this policy.
 2. The principal of the school reserves the right to notify all parents of minors in the school to ensure they are aware of the offender/predator's background.



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Diocesan Parishes and Schools

Acknowledgement and Agreement

By my signature below, I attest that I have read, understand, and hereby agree to abide by the provisions of the Diocese of St. Augustine *Registered Sex Offenders and Predators Policy for Diocesan Parishes and Schools*.

Full Legal Name of Registered Sex Offender/Predator

Signature of Registered Sex Offender/Predator

Date

Full Legal Name of Approved Chaperone

Signature of Approved Chaperone

Date

Signature of Pastor/Principal

Date

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

Acknowledged by the Safe Environment Office: _____

Acknowledged by Office of the Superintendent: _____ (If a school)