

# **Diocese of Columbus Safe Environment Manual**



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# **DECREE – ESTABLISHING POLICIES DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL ABUSE OF MINORS BY PRIESTS, DEACONS OR OTHER CHURCH PERSONNEL**

## **1. Introduction.**

The Diocese of Columbus is committed to the protection and safety of children in the Diocese of Columbus. This commitment follows the fundamental mission of the Church to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, to give authentic witness to the moral teaching of the Scriptures and the tradition of the Church, and to uphold the human dignity of every person. The diocese is fully resolved to use every effort to prevent the occurrence of any act of abuse within the jurisdiction of the diocese and to confront any act of abuse immediately and forthrightly so as to maintain the trust and respect of the faithful within the diocese for their clergy and the Church.

This decree is issued in accordance with Canon 31 of the Code of Canon Law and shall be binding upon all members of the Diocese of Columbus immediately upon its publication. This decree seeks to comply fully with and specify in more detail the steps to be taken in implementing canon law, especially Canons 1717-1719.

The provisions of this decree are adopted to fulfill the commitment of the Diocese of Columbus to the protection and safety of children. In addition to the specific provisions of this decree, the measures regarding the prevention of sexual abuse of minors, as well as the pastoral, administrative and canonical response to incidents of alleged sexual abuse of minors, and the standards of behavior for clergy and others in positions of trust, are subject to other canonical laws, diocesan policies, guidelines and practices, which individually retain the force proper to each. Matters which are fully treated elsewhere or are determined by other canonical or diocesan laws or policies, universal or particular, generally are not repeated in this decree. The Diocese of Columbus acknowledges the binding force of the Essential Norms as particular law for the Church in the United States, and no part of this policy is to be interpreted in a way that conflicts with those Norms or other binding canon or civil laws.

These policies are to comply with the requirements of canon law, and are adopted as part of the disciplinary process of the Roman Catholic Church.

## **2. Definitions.**

For the purpose of implementing this decree, the following definitions shall apply:

1. Sexual Abuse shall have the meaning stated in the USCCB document, Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, at Footnote 1 to Article 1. The term shall also apply to any allegation as to a minor who is an abused child as defined in Section 2151.031 of the Ohio Revised Code.
2. A Minor is any person under the age of 18 at the time an act of sexual abuse occurs; a person who habitually lacks the use of reason is to be considered equivalent to a minor.

3. A Priest shall be any priest ordained in the Roman Catholic Church, who has not been laicized or who has not defected from the ministry, and incardinated in the Diocese of Columbus or legitimately assigned in the diocese under the authority of the Bishop of Columbus at the time an act of sexual abuse of a minor occurred.
4. A Deacon shall be any deacon ordained in the Roman Catholic Church, who has not been laicized or who has not defected from the ministry, and incardinated in the Diocese of Columbus or legitimately assigned in the Diocese of Columbus under the authority of the Bishop of Columbus when an act of sexual abuse of a minor occurred.
5. Other Church Personnel subject to this decree shall be any employee, agent or volunteer authorized by the appropriate Church authority to have care, control or custody of a minor, and having responsibility for the care, control or custody of a minor when an act of sexual abuse of that minor occurred.
6. Ordinary shall mean the Diocesan Bishop or the Vicar General.

### 3. Organizational Policies.

The following action shall be taken under the authority and direction of the Bishop of Columbus:

1. The decree which establishes the standards of clergy conduct as stated in Appendix I is incorporated as part of these policies. These standards shall be provided to each Priest, Deacon or other appropriate Church Personnel in the Diocese of Columbus, and shall be published in the diocesan newspaper. These standards of clergy conduct may be reviewed and revised periodically at the direction of the Ordinary.
2. A competent person designated by the Bishop will coordinate assistance for the immediate pastoral care of persons who claim to have been sexually abused when they were minors by a Priest, Deacon or Other Personnel. It will be the responsibility of this person to assist with the provision of counseling, spiritual/pastoral assistance and other social services to abused persons who seek such service.
3. The Diocesan Chancellor shall be responsible for the administration of the Procedural Policies established in Section IV, below, without prejudice, however, to the rights and duties of the Diocesan Ordinary and the Promoter of Justice.
4. The form for commencement of a complaint set forth in Appendix II is adopted. Copies of the form shall be available at each parish office and school in the diocese, and at the Diocesan Chancery, 198 East Broad Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215. These forms may also be found on the Diocesan website—[www.colsdioc.org](http://www.colsdioc.org).
5. A Review Board has been established to function as a confidential consultative body to assist the Bishop in discharging his responsibilities, particularly in respect to the fulfillment of Canons 1717-1719. The functions of the Review Board shall be:

- a. Advising the Bishop in his assessment of allegations of sexual abuse of minors involving Priests and Deacons and in his determination of suitability for ministry;
  - b. Reviewing diocesan policies for dealing with sexual abuse of minors; and,
  - c. Offering advice on all aspects of cases involving sexual abuse of minors, whether retrospectively or prospectively.
  - d. The Review Board shall operate under the Diocese of Columbus Review Board Policies and Procedures attached hereto as Appendix III.
6. The communications policy for the Diocese of Columbus with regard to matters treated in this decree shall be as follows: Within the confines of respect for the civil and canonical rights to privacy and the reputation of all individuals involved, the Diocese of Columbus will communicate allegations where there is sufficient information to proceed. While canon law requires that the acts of an investigation regarding a priest or deacon must be kept confidential and the Norms further require that the deliberations of the Review Board be confidential, nevertheless, the diocese will strive to communicate the major decisions which have been made in individual cases, the status of persons, and the progress of investigations and procedures insofar as is possible without divulging such confidential information. The Diocesan Director of Communications may be consulted to assist with appropriate responses to the media or to the public. If diocesan schools or religious education programs are involved, the Superintendent of the Department of Education may be requested to provide assistance in communications.
7. A “Safe Environment” program shall be provided for the Diocese, and a Coordinator to oversee this program will be appointed and will be available to assist with implementation and administration of the program, and to respond to concerns, questions, and requests for information. The program shall provide education and training to all Church personnel to maintain a safe environment for children. The Diocese will cooperate with parents, community leaders and other interested parties to establish and provide a safe environment for children.
8. All school staff and volunteers who have care, custody and control of students must have on file a current Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation criminal background check pursuant to Policy 4110.0 of the School Policies and Regulations of the Department of Education, Diocese of Columbus. All Priests, Deacons, Church Personnel, other than school personnel, and Church volunteers who have unsupervised access to children must be informed that they may be subject to fingerprinting and criminal background checks at any time as required by Section 109.575 of the Ohio Revised Code. Actual background checks of Priests, Deacons, Other Church Personnel or volunteers with unsupervised access to children may be requested by Church officials in cases determined to be appropriate or necessary. The document entitled “Best Practices for Screening Volunteers who Work with Children and Youth in the Parishes of the Catholic Diocese of Columbus” attached as Appendix IV is recommended for reference in regard to screening volunteers.

9. These policies will be provided to each Priest and Deacon in the diocese. The policies shall be published in the diocesan newspaper periodically. The policies shall be available for distribution or inspection by any Other Church Personnel with care, control or custody of minors and will be provided upon request made by any person at any parish office or at the Chancery Office, 198 East Broad Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215.

#### 4. Procedural Policies.

An allegation of sexual abuse of a minor by a Priest, Deacon or Other Church Personnel may be initiated in various ways, including the filing of a complaint form, direct contact with the Ordinary, a pastor, or school or Church personnel by the party alleging abuse or a family member thereof, or by a claim presented in a civil law proceeding. The allegations may be by or for a specifically identified claimant. Allegations cannot be received under condition of anonymity except for the most serious reasons.

The following actions shall be taken immediately upon receipt of any allegation, regardless of who presents the allegation or how the allegation is received:

1. The allegation shall immediately be referred to the Ordinary. Any subordinate person in the Church who receives such an allegation in whatever manner shall forward it to the Ordinary without delay. If the allegation is received in the form of a civil action, the Diocesan Attorney shall immediately be notified and shall take appropriate action to respond to the civil claim.
2. A preliminary evaluation of the allegation will be initiated by the Ordinary and conducted promptly and objectively to determine if the allegation has any semblance of truth. If the allegation does not have a semblance of truth (for example, if it lacks all specificity, is irreconcilable with known facts, or cannot be deciphered), nothing further will be done.
3. If the allegation has any semblance of truth, the following actions will be taken:
  - a. The matter shall immediately be reported to the civil authorities. The Diocesan Attorney shall be consulted as to the requirements and procedures for reporting. The claimant shall be advised of the claimant's right to report the allegations to the civil authorities if the claimant has not previously reported. The diocese will cooperate with any civil investigation as required by law.
  - b. If the accused is not a Priest or a Deacon, the Church administrator with authority over the person accused will be advised and the Church administrator, after consultation with the Ordinary, will determine appropriate action, such as suspension or termination of employment.
  - c. If the allegation involves a Priest or a Deacon, the investigation mentioned in Canon 1717 (the "prior investigation") will be initiated by decree of the Ordinary, unless it appears the investigation is entirely superfluous. The accused cleric shall obtain civil and canonical counsel prior to any discussions with diocesan

authorities regarding the allegation. (In cases where a cleric of another jurisdiction is the accused, the matter will be referred to the cleric's proper Ordinary for conduct of the prior investigation.) If circumstances indicate, the cleric may be placed on administrative leave immediately pending the investigation. Such circumstances may include immediate concern for the safety of children or publicity and notoriety of the allegation. For cases involving Priests or Deacons, a Review Board has been established according to the requirements of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People and the Essential Norms. The Ordinary will seek the advice of the Review Board in its capacity as a confidential consultative board in conducting the prior investigation as foreseen in Canon 1717.1 and 1718.3. The allegation will be referred promptly to the Secretary of the Review Board, who shall then proceed according to the established procedures of the Review Board (see Appendix III). The Promoter of Justice shall participate in all meetings of the Review Board in which an allegation of abuse is being discussed by the Review Board.

- d. At any time following the preliminary evaluation, the person designated by the Bishop to coordinate the pastoral care of victims will determine the appropriate actions for healing and reconciliation with the accuser and the accuser's family. The actions may include provision of counseling, spiritual and/or pastoral assistance and other social services available and agreed to by the accuser and the diocese. The Bishop or his representative will offer to meet with the accuser and the accuser's family in recognition of a sincere commitment to the spiritual and emotional well being of the accuser and the accuser's family.
  - e. Care must be taken lest anyone's good name be endangered by this investigation (Canon 1717.2). Appropriate information as to the facts involved in the allegations as determined by the Ordinary in consultation with the Director of Communications shall be communicated to the public pursuant to the communications policy found in Section III, No. 6 above.
4. When the Ordinary determines that sufficient information has been obtained, the Review Board shall consider the case and offer recommendations to the Ordinary in his assessment of allegations of sexual abuse of minors and of suitability for ministry. Having heard the Review Board's recommendations, therefore, the Ordinary shall proceed as follows:
- a. If the allegation is determined by the Ordinary not to be credible, the matter shall be closed. The accused and the accuser shall be advised as to the results of the investigation and the closing of the case. All appropriate actions to clear the name of the accused shall be followed.
  - b. If an allegation involving a Priest or a Deacon is admitted or is determined by the Ordinary to be probable, and if accordingly he determines that the penalty of dismissal from the clerical state is to be sought, the Ordinary, in accordance with Canon 1718.4, shall inform the accused of the results of the investigation and



inquire whether he may wish to pursue voluntary laicization in order to avoid the necessity of a penal judicial trial. The Ordinary will inform the accused of this by means of a decree in which the Ordinary gives the accused a suitable period of time to consider his options. In the same decree, the Ordinary may close the prior investigation and invoke the application of the precautionary measures mentioned in Canon 1722 in accordance with Paragraph 6 of the Norms.

- c. When the accused has responded to the decree mentioned in the previous paragraph, if the accused wishes to petition for laicization voluntarily, a decree of suspension will be issued and the process for voluntary laicization will be undertaken in the normal manner. If the accused does not wish to proceed voluntarily, then the Ordinary will issue the decree mentioned in Canon 1718.1. Since sexual abuse, as defined in the Charter and Norms and as referred to in Canon 1395.2 is a grave delict reserved to the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, this matter shall be referred to said Congregation, which may either call the case to itself or advise the Ordinary how to proceed. The remainder of the Penal Process is governed by the applicable universal and particular canon laws.

5. At all times, the Bishop has the executive power of governance as stated in Paragraph 9 of the Norms.

#### 5. Other Policies

1. Paragraph 12 of the Norms shall be followed in regard to the transfer from ministerial assignment from the Diocese of Columbus to another diocese or religious province. If a Priest or a Deacon is to be received into the Diocese of Columbus, before receiving the Priest or Deacon, the Bishop will obtain the necessary information regarding any past act of sexual abuse of a minor by a Priest or a Deacon in question and will determine if the transfer will be accepted. Any past history of sexual abuse would disqualify a Priest or Deacon from another jurisdiction for service in the Diocese of Columbus.
2. These policies shall be reviewed at least once in each five-year period. The Review Board shall commence the process of review and shall assist the Bishop by presenting a report to him as to each review, including recommendations for amendments, or stating that the policies have been reviewed and no amendments are recommended by the Review Board. The Bishop shall advise the Review Board as to action taken by him in response to the report.
3. If allegations are resolved by agreement between parties, the terms of the agreement shall not include provisions as to confidentiality unless grave and substantial reasons for confidentiality are presented by the accuser with a request for confidentiality, and the reasons are stated in the agreement.
4. The Bishop or his representative shall maintain regular contact with Priests and Deacons who have been accused. The Bishop or his representative may provide assistance, advice and support to the accused, and may provide and facilitate referrals to counselors and other

professionals who can provide psychological, emotional and spiritual assistance to the accused. The Bishop or his delegate shall monitor Priests and Deacons who are on leaves of absence, or removed from the ministry but not laicized, to provide assistance and to determine that any conditions or obligations of the accused are being followed.

5. These policies are to be administered to be uniform with the *Charter* and the *Norms*, and any inconsistencies shall be resolved by conforming these policies to the *Charter* and the *Norms*.

Given at the Chancery Office this 15th day of May 2003.

The Most Rev. James A. Griffin  
Bishop of Columbus

Amended this 30<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2016.

The Most Rev. Frederick F. Campbell  
Bishop of Columbus

## **DECREE – STANDARDS OF CLERGY CONDUCT**

### **Preamble**

This decree establishes standards of clergy conduct in accordance with Article 6 and Article 12 of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People approved in November 2002 by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. These policies are also applicable, *mutatis mutandis*, to other persons in positions of trust in the diocese.

The purpose of these standards is to make clear to clergy and others in positions of trust the need to exercise prudence, avoid any semblance of impropriety, protect their own ministry and reputation, and, most importantly, to safeguard children, young people and other vulnerable persons from harm. At the same time, these standards of conduct are not intended to stifle the ability of priests, deacons and others who exercise some ecclesiastical office or ministry to carry out their ministry or to be available and accessible to their people, nor are they intended to create an atmosphere of suspicion. Furthermore, these standards are general and are to be interpreted broadly rather than minutely structured in every detail. It is understood that the standards require adaptation to the various circumstances of time and place or in case of emergency.

This decree is not an exhaustive policy but presupposes and further specifies other laws, policies and procedures already in existence; in particular, in accord with Canon 285, it seeks to further specify appropriate clerical conduct and, in accord with Canon 277, to provide more specific norms to the clergy for conducting themselves with due prudence. It is understood that acts already condemned by the law of the Church or by the moral teaching of the Church are always and everywhere forbidden and it is not necessary to reiterate them in this document. Given the tense and suspicious atmosphere which prevails today, even perfectly innocent activities may now be viewed as compromising, ambiguous or imprudent. It is this reality which these standards seek to address.

### **Standards**

These standards apply to the incardinated clergy of the Diocese of Columbus at all times and in every place, both within and outside of the Diocese of Columbus. They apply to all religious and extern priests and deacons who exercise any ministry under the authority or oversight of the Bishop of Columbus. They apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to lay persons in positions of trust exercising an authorized ministry as an employee or volunteer for the Diocese of Columbus, its offices, agencies, parishes, institutions and organizations.

**ALL CLERGY (AND, INsofar AS APPLICABLE,  
OTHER PERSONS IN POSITIONS OF TRUST) SHALL:**

1. Ensure that their activities and interactions with other people, particularly youth, shall be as open as the situation allows, and shall avoid any interaction that has even the appearance of being secret or clandestine.
2. Make a clear distinction between the public and private areas in the rectory, and make the

private areas generally inaccessible to visitors.

3. Meet with individuals only in the office of the church or public areas of the rectory, church or school, and, insofar as possible, never be alone with a minor, especially in circumstances which are concealed from public view (e.g., behind closed doors or in an automobile). The confessional or other location in which the Sacrament of Reconciliation is being properly celebrated according to the approved rite is exempt from this provision. Care must also be exercised whenever a minor requests a private, confidential conference.
4. Limit access to the priest's private quarters to the priest, rectory staff, other clergy and the priest's relatives.
5. Avoid spending excessive amounts of time with the same parishioners or families, or in the homes of the same families or persons. (While social interaction with laypersons is desirable, exceeding prudent boundaries can be misconstrued.)
6. Avoid forming purely personal relationships with minors. Young persons should not be the focus of an adult's social life, nor should adults share inappropriate personal information with youth or pursue purely social, recreational or interpersonal activities alone with them. They should not visit youth in their homes when parents or other responsible adults are not present.
7. Show broad interest in the children and youth of the parish or assignment but avoid showing preference or giving privileges to specific individuals, such as giving them money or gifts, asking them to accompany oneself on errands, asking them to perform services or help with jobs or tasks, outside of regular employment, excusing them from school or giving them access to the rectory.
8. Follow all diocesan regulations regarding youth activities and ensure that another reliable adult is present whenever supervising or chaperoning a minor or a group of minors, which may only occur in the context of events sponsored by the parish, school or diocese.
9. Remember you are role models who must always reflect the values of the Catholic Church in word and action in all circumstances, public and private, whether on or off duty. In particular, speak and act gently and respectfully and with discretion in any mode of communication, and avoid all coarse, demeaning or suggestive language, conversations or discussions.
10. Never request or permit young persons to accompany you on vacation trips or overnight or day trips.
11. Never invite young persons to a private residence or other private dwelling, be it a family home, vacation cottage, rental, condominium or any other place which is not then and there being used as a venue for a church-sponsored gathering.
12. Never acquire, possess, or distribute pornographic images of minors by whatever means or

using whatever technology may be available.

13. Always strive to act with utmost professionalism, to develop a keen sense of propriety and the ability to sense and avoid potentially problematic situations.
14. Behave in such a forthright and open way as if every action were being observed by an unseen third party.

Given at the Chancery Office this 28th day of January, 2003.

The Most Rev. James A. Griffin

Bishop of Columbus

Amended this 30<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2016.

The Most Rev. Frederick F. Campbell

Bishop of Columbus

**DIOCESE OF COLUMBUS COMPLAINT FORM FOR ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL ABUSE OF A MINOR**

This form may be used to present allegations that a Priest, Deacon or Church employee, agent or volunteer has committed an act of sexual abuse of a minor. The completed Form is CONFIDENTIAL and is to be submitted to: Victims Assistance Coordinator, Diocese of Columbus, 198 East Broad Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215, in a sealed envelope clearly marked CONFIDENTIAL.

**I. INFORMATION AS TO MINOR**

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Name and Address of Parent(s) or Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone No: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Parish: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of school attending: \_\_\_\_\_

**II. INFORMATION AS TO THE ACCUSED**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_ Clergy \_\_\_\_\_ Deacon \_\_\_\_\_ Employee \_\_\_\_\_ Volunteer

Name and Address of place of employment: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Has accused been confronted or informed of allegation? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

If yes, when and by whom: \_\_\_\_\_

**III. INFORMATION AS TO ALLEGATIONS**

Brief description of alleged abuse (time, place and acts): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Have the allegations been reported to any civil authorities or Church personnel? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes

\_\_\_\_\_ No

If yes, when, how and to whom: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Report

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Person Reporting

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

## **DIOCESE OF COLUMBUS REVIEW BOARD POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **I. Purpose of Review Board**

The Review Board of the Diocese of Columbus is established under the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, and the Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests, Deacons, or Other Church Personnel, as published by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. The Charter and Essential Norms are attached hereto as Appendix A and Appendix B, and are incorporated into these Policies and Procedures. The actions of the Board of Review are to protect the children in the Diocese of Columbus, and are taken as part of the internal administration of the disciplinary process of the Roman Catholic Church. The Board of Review will assist the Bishop by:

- A. The assessment of allegations of sexual abuse of minors by priests, deacons and other church personnel in order to advise the Bishop as to whether the allegations appear to be credible;
- B. Making recommendations concerning fitness for ministry in particular cases; and
- C. Reviewing the policy and procedures of the Diocese for dealing with allegations of sexual abuse of minors at least every two years to recommend to the Bishop any appropriate modifications.

### **II. Formation of the Board of Review**

The Board of Review shall consist of at least five members in full communion with the Catholic Church, the majority of which will be lay persons not in the employ of the Diocese. At least one member of the Board of Review shall be a priest, and at least one member shall have expertise in the treatment of sexual abuse of minors.

The initial members of the Board of Review shall be appointed by the Bishop. Two of the initial members as selected by the members shall have initial terms of two years each. The other three members will have an initial term of three years. Terms after the initial terms shall be for three years. Any member of the Board of Review can serve a maximum of two terms.

In the event of termination of membership for any reason, including expiration of a term, the remaining members of the Board shall nominate a replacement member. The nomination shall be presented to the Bishop, and upon approval by the Bishop, the nominee shall become a member of the Board of Review.

### **III. Operating Procedures**

The Board of Review shall have the following operating procedures:

- A. The members of the Board shall annually elect a member to be Chairperson, and a member to be Secretary. The Chairperson shall act as spokesperson for the Board of Review, and the



Secretary shall maintain the records of the Board of Review. Members are eligible for reelection without limitation. The Chairperson shall preside over the meetings of the Board of Review, and if the Chairperson is not present, the Secretary shall preside over the meeting. If neither officer is present, the members present shall elect a member to preside over the meeting, and a member to maintain the records of the meeting.

- B. The fiscal year of the Board of Review shall be from July 1 through June 30.
- C. The Board of Review may adopt any operating rules which the members determine appropriate for the conduct of business. It is anticipated that the deliberation of matters before the Board will be primarily and preferentially by discussion, and that actions of the Board will be taken by consensus of the members. If consensus is not reached, a matter presented to the Board may be decided by vote, with each member having one vote, and a majority of the votes of the members present shall control. The actions taken by the Board shall be formalized in minutes which shall be prepared under authority of the Secretary, and signed by the Secretary.
- D. All deliberations and actions taken by the Board of Review shall be confidential. A disclosure of any information shall be made solely to the Bishop or the Bishop's representative. If the Board of Review desires or recommends further disclosure of any matters, the Board shall advise the Bishop as to the matter to be disclosed and the method of disclosure. If the Bishop requests, the Bishop and the Review Board would review and discuss information prior to disclosure. Within the confines of law and the Norms, and of respect for the privacy and the reputation of the individuals involved, the Board will deal as openly as possible with members of the community.

#### **IV. Procedures for Assistance in Assessing Allegations**

- 1) Any allegation of sexual abuse of a minor which is made against any priest, deacon, or other church personnel shall be received by the designated Diocesan personnel as stated in the Charter and the Essential Norms. The Diocesan personnel will immediately determine if the allegations are credible, as provided in the Charter, Article 5. If the allegation is determined not credible, no further action shall be taken. If the allegation is admitted, or is determined to be credible, the procedures in the Charter, Article 5, shall be followed.
- 2) When an allegation is referred to the Board, the following procedures will be observed:
  - 1. The Secretary of the Board of Review will be requested by the Diocesan representative immediately to call a meeting of the Board of Review. The Secretary will call a meeting within 14 days. The Bishop or his representative shall present to the Board of Review the allegations, and all the materials received and considered by the Diocesan representative. The Bishop or his representative shall personally attend the meeting of the Board of Review to discuss the allegations.
  - 2. The information presented to the Board of Review may include any written

statements presented by the alleged victim, and any statements by the clergy or church personnel involved.

3. The Board of Review may request information in addition to the information presented by the Bishop or the Bishop's representative. The additional information may consist of written materials or statements, and may include a personal appearance by the alleged victim or the clergy or church personnel involved, if the Board of Review determines such a personal appearance would be appropriate.
4. After receipt of all information determined necessary by the Board of Review, the Board of Review will prepare a written recommendation to the Bishop stating the determination of the Board of Review as to the allegations presented. The Board of Review shall set as its goal to present its recommendation to the Bishop within ten working days after receipt of all information.
5. Upon receipt of the recommendation, the Bishop may accept or reject the recommendation of the Board of Review. The assessment of the allegations by the Board of Review, and the determination by the Bishop, shall be communicated to the alleged victim and to the clergy or church personnel involved immediately upon completion of the determination by the Bishop. The information provided to the alleged victim and the clergy or church personnel involved as to the determination will include information as to referral of the case to the Provincial Appellate Review Board established under the Essential Norms, Paragraph 6.

#### **V. Assistance in Assessing Fitness for Ministry**

In the event sexual abuse by a priest or a deacon is admitted, or is established, the Bishop shall follow Canon Law and the Charter, Article 5, as to determining the status of the priest or deacon in ministry. Prior to making his determination under Canon Law, the Bishop shall request the Board of Review to assist the Bishop in assessing the fitness for ministry of the priest or deacon involved. The Bishop may also seek assistance from the Board of Review in determining the fitness for service in the Church as to an accused who is not a priest or deacon.

If the Bishop requests assistance in assessing fitness for ministry, the Bishop shall present to the Board of Review the information available to the Bishop as to the acts involved, and any personal information, such as age, present status of ministry (such as active or retired), and any pertinent health or infirmity information. Upon receipt of the information, the Board of Review shall recommend to the Bishop whether the provisions of the Charter, Article 5, should be applied, or whether some other action as to the ministry of the clergy or church personnel involved should be applied.

#### **VI. Review of Policies and Procedures**

The Charter, Article 2, provides that a printed form will be available for use in presenting an allegation to the Diocese. The Board of Review shall review the complaint form, and the complaint form shall be adopted for use in the Diocese upon approval by the Board of Review.

The complaint form shall be a part of periodic public announcements, so that the public will be aware of the procedure to make allegations of abuse of minors to the Diocese. The Board of Review will review and approve the form of public announcements, and the method of making the announcements, at least annually.

The Essential Norms, Paragraph 2, require the Diocese to have a written policy on the sexual abuse of minors by priests, deacons, or other church personnel. This policy must be adopted within three months after the effective date of the Norms. The Board of Review shall be presented with the form of written policy to be adopted by the Diocese, and the Board of Review may request the Bishop to provide additional information or background to clarify or explain the policies as proposed. The Board of Review shall review the proposed policies and procedures, and shall provide written comments to the Bishop as to the proposed policies and procedures.

The abuse policies and procedures of the Diocese shall be subject to review and modification by the Bishop, if appropriate or necessary. Any proposed amendments shall be presented to the Board of Review for consideration prior to adoption by the Bishop, and the Board of Review shall provide the Bishop with any comments as to the proposed amendments.

The Board of Review shall make a full review of the current policies and procedures of the Diocese at least once in each two-year calendar period. The Board of Review shall recommend to the Bishop any modifications which the Board of Review determines to be appropriate to ensure that the policies and procedures are in full compliance with the Charter and the Essential Norms, and provide for the protection of minors within the spirit and the letter of the Charter and the Essential Norms. The Board of Review shall present to the Bishop any recommendations for changes in the policies and procedures.

## **VII. Providing Additional Advice or Responses**

In addition to those actions described above, the Board of Review may provide any other advice to the Bishop as to sexual abuse of minor cases as requested by the Bishop, or as determined to be appropriate by the Board of Review. This advice or response may be applied retrospectively or prospectively. This advice or response may include, but is not limited to, review and recommendation as to the Outreach program referred to in the Charter, Article 1, consideration of any request for confidentiality of settlement agreements as referred to in the Charter, Article 3, the Communications policy referred to in the Charter, Article 7, and review of the Safe Environmental programs to be adopted under the Charter, Article 12. The Board of Review may also offer assistance in the cooperation with other churches and ecclesial communities, religious bodies, institutions of learning and other interested organizations in conducting research in the area of sexual abuse of minors, as referred to in the Charter, Article 16.

## **VIII. Relationship of These Regulations to the Canon Law of the Church**

In the event that any of the above contained norms or norms referenced above are in conflict with the canon law of the Church currently in force, the provisions of canon law will prevail.

As revised 11/20/02

**REFERENCE & BACKGROUND CHECK POLICY**

**Effective Date of Policy:** October 1, 2016

**Summary of the Diocese of Columbus' New Policy**

A vital aspect of providing outstanding ministry and service within the Diocese of Columbus is assuring the proper and effective handling of job references and background checks. Unfortunately there have been times when a potential employee, current employee, or former employee is discovered to have problematic behaviors and, at times, to have engaged in harmful or criminal activity. Understanding this, the Diocese seeks to deal effectively with this reality and prevent problems through a policy and practice for reference and background checking that emphasizes a collaborative and coordinated approach among parish, school, agency, and Diocesan staff. We want to employ the best and most qualified people into our churches, schools, and offices. This new policy helps assure these goals.

This policy applies to parishes and parochial schools; and Diocesan offices and high schools. It does not apply to separately incorporated agencies under the authority of the Bishop that are not part of the regular Diocesan employment system; those entities shall treat this subject separately.

This policy covers the following areas:

- The creation of a centralized tracking of information for reference check purposes and staff from around the Diocese working together to make this an effective tool.
- The existing centralized database of background checks administered by the Diocese.
- Reference checks for potential new hires within the Diocese.
- Criminal background checks for new hires at all locations.
- Handling reference check and other information requests for current or former employees within the Diocese.
- Criminal background checks and arrests of current or former employees.
- Criminal records analysis.

There are numerous benefits in this new policy. First, it enables all of us to take a cohesive approach to these matters that emphasizes all personnel in the Diocese partnering in the effort to assure safe and healthy work environments throughout the Diocese. This also helps assure that the best and most qualified candidates work within the Diocese. We will be better able to identify problematic persons and situations prior to offering employment. Finally, this policy assures compliance with current civil law regarding the maintenance of criminal background check information as well as compliance with current EEOC regulations regarding assessment of employees who have criminal convictions.

### ***Authorized Personnel***

1. The Diocesan Director of Personnel, regarding employment matters for diocesan offices and Diocesan level agencies, oversight and maintenance of the Diocesan Human Resources system and all programs used for this purpose, and consultation for all locations utilizing the Diocesan HR system.
2. Pastors at parishes and those properly delegated with hiring authority by the pastor, e.g. business managers and parochial school principals.
3. Directors of Diocesan offices.
4. Principals of Diocesan high schools.
5. Diocesan Safe Environment Manager, regarding matters related to criminal background checks and the Diocesan criminal background check database.

### ***Procedures***

1. Centralized tracking of reference check completion:
  - a. All offers of employment are to be made contingent upon completion of a satisfactory background and reference check. All of the necessary notices and consents, including those required under the federal Fair Credit Reporting Act, must be completed by the prospective employee and the hiring authority.
  - b. When a new employee accepts an offer of employment within the Diocese, the hiring authority at the location where the person will work will have the new hire information required by the Human Resource (HR) system entered into the system in accordance with already established practice.
  - c. One of the fields to be completed during new hire data entry is a mandatory check box for whether or not reference checks were done prior to hiring the person. The hiring authority will complete this field by clicking “yes” or “no.”
  - d. Once the data is entered, it is submitted for approval by the hiring authority and moved to a holding place in the HR computer system.
  - e. From the holding place, the Director of Personnel will review the information submitted, including checking whether or not reference checks were completed.
  - f. If the data submitted verifies that reference checks were completed, the Director of Personnel will grant approval and forward the entered data to the Diocesan Insurance office for secondary approval and entry into active status within the system.
  - g. If the data submitted indicates that reference checks were not completed, the Director of Personnel will contact the hiring authority and review the importance of doing reference checks.
  - h. If the hiring authority decides to go ahead and request reference check information, he or she will complete this according to #5 below and upon completion will resubmit the employee information to the HR system.
  - i. If the hiring authority still declines to do reference checks, the Director of Personnel will note this in his or her records and grant approval for the employee’s information to proceed to the Diocesan Insurance Office for final approval and entry into active status.
  - j. All entries placed in the HR computer system will be stored there permanently.
2. Centralized tracking of Protecting God’s Children training

- a. In accordance with Chancery Protocol 03-06, all employees within the Diocese of Columbus, even those with no contact with minors, shall complete Protecting God's Children (PGC) safe environment training within 60 days of starting employment.\*
  - b. When new hire information is entered by the hiring authority, there will be a mandatory check box verifying whether or not the PGC training has been completed.
  - c. If the Director of Personnel notes that PGC training was not completed prior to hire, he or she shall email a reminder to the hiring authority of the deadline for completing the training. The Director of Personnel shall, with that email, c.c. the notice to the Safe Environment Manager so that he or she can assure that the training is completed by the new hire by the deadline.
3. Maintenance of a centralized database of criminal background checks:
- a. All criminal background check information must, under state and federal law, be sent directly to the Diocese's central database, administered by the Safe Environment Manager, for entry into the central database.
  - b. Under civil law, both federal and state, only the central database of criminal background checks maintained by the Safe Environment Manager can serve as the official source of any information regarding criminal background checks, and Diocesan offices, agencies, and schools as well as parishes and parochial schools must not receive this information from other entities' background check databases. In these circumstances, a new criminal background check will need to be completed.
  - c. These background checks are being done by third-party providers (typically Ohio BCI and FBI) and not internally by our own personnel. Therefore, the requirements of applicable law, including the Fair Credit Reporting Act, must be observed.
  - d. Information in the Diocesan background check database can and will be shared with Diocesan entities (parishes and parochial schools; Diocesan offices and agencies; and Diocesan high schools) and their hiring authorities.
4. Reference checks for a potential new hire at a Diocesan Office:
- a. The prospective employee must furnish names of references regarding his or her qualifications and suitability for the job for which he or she has applied.
  - b. References may include current and past supervisors, pastors, co-workers, and individuals who can attest to the candidate's work ethics, character, skills, experiences, responsibilities, and so forth.
  - c. These references are to be submitted directly to the Director of Personnel when the hiring is being done by a Diocesan office.
  - d. At least one of the submitted references must be from a current or past employer. The candidate will be asked to sign a release for prior employers to answer questions from the Diocese. A candidate refusing this will not be offered employment.
  - e. Where possible, inquiries made of prior employers will be directed to administrative level personnel rather than coworkers only.
  - f. The Director of Personnel may make additional inquiries about the job candidate beyond the names provided by the prospective employee. When possible, this should include interviews with direct supervisors at prior jobs to determine the candidate's eligibility for rehire.

- g. The prospective employee is also to provide a list of all prior jobs and account for all gaps in employment in order to be considered.
  - h. The Director of Personnel will note that references are completed satisfactorily on the new hire checklist for Diocesan office employees.
  - i. Failure to complete references for a prospective employee for a Diocesan office will result in entry of new hire information into the HR system being delayed until proper reference checking is completed satisfactorily.
  - j. In like fashion, prospective teachers and principals at diocesan schools must also comply with the above described process.
  - k. Employees starting work with an entity in the Diocesan HR system shall be notified that if there is a separation of employment from the Diocesan system, only the employee's name, employment dates, position title, and eligibility for rehire status will typically be released. The Director of Personnel, though, may provide additional information, at his or her discretion, according to the circumstances.
  - l. Eligibility for rehire status is a required field to be answered when the hiring authority is filling out the electronic form and to remove a person from the HR system. A business-related and valid reason must be included when classifying a terminated employee as ineligible for rehire.
5. Reference checks for a new hire at locations other than Diocesan Offices:
- a. Administrative personnel at these locations are strongly urged to follow the same reference check steps described in procedure #4 above.
  - b. The administrative person at the location who received the reference feedback information shall verify to the Director of Personnel whether or not references were checked and completed using the HR system data entry process described in #1 above.
  - c. The same caution given to employees in 4.k. above will also be given to employees in non-Diocesan office locations.
6. Criminal background checks for new hires at all locations:
- a. All candidates for employment, even those who will have no contact with minors, will undergo a criminal background check before starting employment in accordance with Chancery Protocol 03-06.
  - b. This shall be required when a job offer is extended to a prospective employee, and the job offer shall be contingent upon the prospective employee successfully completing the criminal background check. The prospective employee will be informed of this requirement in his or her letter of offer of employment.
  - c. Whether or not a criminal background check has been completed will be verified in a mandatory field during the new employee data entry in the same manner described in #1 above.
  - d. Anytime the Director of Personnel notes that a criminal background check has not been completed, he or she will deny approval and notify the hiring authority that the criminal background check must be completed prior to approval and moving the new hire to active status, and the prospective employee will not be permitted to start work until this is completed.



- e. In like fashion, unless approval is given by the Safe Environment Manager, prospective teachers and principals who have not complied with the above described process will not be permitted to sign a contract and start work until this requirement has been satisfied.
- f. Persons residing in Ohio at least five years will undergo a background check with the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation and Identification (BCI&I). Persons who have resided in Ohio less than five years will undergo a Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) check as well as a BCI&I check.
- g. For information on sites where the BCI&I and FBI checks can be done, the prospective employee can be assisted by the Safe Environment Manager (614-241-2568).
- h. The Safe Environment Manager will forward criminal background check results to the Director of Personnel or other hiring personnel when he or she receives the agency report.
- i. If the prospective employee has already undergone a background check that is documented in the Diocesan database, that information can be used as long as the report is less than six (6) months old. If the existing report is more than six (6) months old, a new background check will be necessary. The Safe Environment Manager will assist with this.
- j. If a criminal background check report has a no-record verification, the prospective employee may start work immediately. A no record verification means that the report sent to the Diocese by the BCI&I and FBI indicates that the person has no convictions documented on his or her record.
- k. If the background check indicates that the prospective employee has one or more convictions on his or her record, the Safe Environment Manager will complete a Criminal Record Analysis sheet to determine the prospective employee's suitability for hire, in accordance with current Federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) regulations.
  - i. Final judgments shall be based on final dispositions of cases and not arrests.
  - ii. The questions to be considered are described in procedure #10 below.
  - iii. The Safe Environment Manager shall be the authority in making judgments in these situations.
- l. Prospective employees who have a conviction that is on the automatic disqualifying list of the Ohio Revised Code (ORC) 3319.39 for working with minors shall not be hired for any job that brings them or potentially brings them into contact with minors. Disqualifying offenses under the ORC are listed in Youth Ministry Policy 200.10.
- m. If the conviction was for an offense that does not rise to the level established by diocesan policy and the ORC 3319.39, the prospective employee who will have contact or potential contact with minors may start employment if the Safe Environment Manager gives his or her approval in accordance with the steps described in #10 below, taking into account whether or not the offense calls into question the prospective employee's judgment, reliability, suitability, professionalism, etc. The employer is not obligated to hire a prospective employee whose criminal conviction falls below the aforementioned ORC threshold.
- n. If a prospective employee has an offense that disqualifies him or her from employment in the judgment of the Safe Environment Manager, following

completion of the Criminal Record Analysis, the applicant shall be advised of the disqualifying grounds, and he or she may appeal for an exception to be made.

- i. The person appealing for the exception must submit as much documentation as possible to justify the request.
  - ii. This appeal must be approved by the prospective hiring personnel and will be reviewed by the Director of Personnel, in consultation with the Safe Environment Manager, Chancellor, and Vicar General.
  - iii. Additionally, such a request involving any prospective school employee shall also be reviewed by the Diocesan Moderator for Education/Superintendent of Schools.
  - iv. The Director of Personnel will decide whether or not an exception is to be granted, and his or her decision shall be final.
- o. Employees starting work in the Diocesan system are notified that their criminal background check information cannot, under state and federal law, be shared with entities outside the Diocesan system.

7. Reference checks for current or former employees at Diocesan offices:

- a. All inquiries from prospective employers, financial, or investigative groups regarding a current or former Diocesan office employee must be referred to the Director of Personnel.
- b. Active employees at Diocesan offices who are not authorized personnel cannot respond to any verbal or written requests regarding a reference or employment verification for a current or former employee. Active employees who are authorized personnel are to inform and consult with the Director of Personnel before responding to such requests.
- c. The Director of Personnel will review these requests and typically release only the name, employment dates, and position title. The Director of Personnel may provide additional information, at his or her discretion, which may include eligibility for continued employment status, according to the circumstances.
- d. An employee or former employee who is the subject of such an inquiry may specifically request in writing that the Director of Personnel release information regarding work performance, attendance, etc. The entity may have a form that the current employee can sign authorizing what may be released, or the current employee may specify in the form of a written letter what can be released regarding him or her.
- e. The Director of Personnel will have final say on determinations of a departing employee's eligibility for rehire status based on facts submitted by the employing entity at time of the employee's employment separation.

8. Reference checks for current or former employees at non-Diocesan office locations:

- a. All inquiries from prospective employers, financial, or investigative groups regarding a current or former employee are to be handled only by authorized personnel (as defined in the list in this protocol that precedes the procedures). Non-authorized personnel must refer such requests to an authorized person.
- b. Authorized personnel receiving such requests should consult with the Director of Personnel to be sure they are fully informed, based on information known to the Director of Personnel or to be researched by the Director of Personnel, before issuing

any responses. It is imperative that this step be followed, assuring that a cohesive and comprehensive response is issued by authorized personnel.

- c. After consultation with the Director of Personnel, authorized personnel will issue reference information in the same ways described in #7 above.
- d. At non-Diocesan office locations, authorized personnel will have final say on determinations of a departing employee's eligibility for rehire status based on facts submitted by the employing entity at time of the employee's employment separation.

9. Criminal background checks and arrests of current or former employees at all locations:

- a. As previously noted, civil law prohibits conveying criminal background check information to entities outside the Diocesan system. Entities or employees requesting this information must be instructed to work with the Ohio BCI&I directly to obtain new criminal background check information for individuals.
- b. If an active employee is arrested, the Director of Personnel shall be notified, and he or she shall review the situation in consultation with the employee's direct supervisors, the Safe Environment Manager, and Chancery officials.
- c. If an active employee is arrested, Diocesan legal counsel and the Diocesan Insurance Office shall be notified as well.
- d. The Director of Personnel or authorized person may permit the employee who has been arrested to continue working while his or her case is litigated and resolved. The Director of Personnel or authorized person may also, if he or she deems it necessary, place the employee who had been arrested on paid or unpaid leave until the case is resolved.
- e. If an employee who was arrested and placed on unpaid leave is later exonerated and found not guilty and permitted to return to work, he or she shall receive the pay that had been withheld while on unpaid leave.
- f. If a current employee is convicted of a crime following an arrest, the Safe Environment Manager, in consultation with the employee's direct supervisors, the Director of Personnel, and Chancery officials, will perform the criminal record analysis described in procedure #10 below in order to determine whether or not the employee can continue working or is to have his or her employment or contract discontinued.
- g. If, in the determination of the Safe Environment Manager, the employee's position brought him or her into contact or potentially into contact with minors, and the employee's conviction was for a disqualifying offense under ORC 3319.39, his or her employment or contract shall be terminated immediately upon conviction.
- h. If an employee who has contact or potential contact with minors was convicted for an offense that is not disqualifying under ORC 3319.39, the Safe Environment Manager, in consultation with the employee's supervisors, the Director of Personnel, and Chancery officials may still determine, upon conclusion of the criminal record analysis, that the employee's employment or contract is to be terminated, particularly taking into consideration the Ohio Department of Education's standards of professional conduct for school personnel.
- i. Requests for appeals will be handled in the same manner described in #6 above.

10. Criminal Records Analysis:

- a. Reviews of a potential or current employee's criminal record will be conducted by the Safe Environment Manager, who will answer the following questions (a separate form is available for answering this review):
- i. Applicant/employee name.
  - ii. Position for which the applicant has applied or current employee holds.
  - iii. Date of analysis.
  - iv. Nature and gravity of offenses.
    - What is the person's conviction record?
    - Sentence or penalty.
    - Nature of crimes (e.g. theft, fraud, violence, property damage, deception, threats, etc.).
    - Gravity of offense (e.g. level of felony, misdemeanor, etc.).
  - v. Time.
    - Amount of time since offense.
    - Amount of time since release from incarceration or probation.
  - vi. Relevance of crime to job position.
    - Essential/important job duties.
    - Nature of work performed.
    - Circumstances of job performance (e.g. level of supervision, interaction with co-workers, vulnerable populations, minors, public, etc.).
    - Job performance environment (e.g. office, customer's premises, outdoor, private, home, etc.).
  - vii. Additional comments/conclusions.
  - viii. Reviewer's name.

### **References**

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Diocese of Columbus Interview & New Employee Coversheet  
ORC 3319.39  
Chancery Protocol 03-06  
YMP Policy 200.10  
SEP SOP 4

*\* The 60-day deadline for completing Protecting God's Children training is approved with this policy and supersedes other deadlines mentioned in previously promulgated policies and issued guidelines.*

**POLICY REGARDING CIVILIAN CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS AND CHILD PROTECTION TRAINING FOR EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS IN THE DIOCESE OF COLUMBUS**

**Clergy, Employees, and Applicants to Clerical Formation**

All clergy serving in the Diocese of Columbus; all parish, school, and diocesan employees; and all applicants to formation for the priesthood or permanent diaconate, regardless of their level of contact with children and youth, are required to complete a civilian criminal background check and participate in a *Protecting God's Children* training session. This policy is applicable to lay employees, professed religious, clergy, and clergy candidates.

**Catholic School Volunteers and Volunteers in Parish Programs/Ministries for Children and Youth**

Every volunteer in a program or ministry for children and youth, regardless of their level of contact with children and youth, is required to complete a civilian criminal background check and participate in a *Protecting God's Children* training session. Duration of service does not mitigate compliance with this policy.

*Examples: Catholic School volunteers, Parish School of Religion (PSR) volunteers, youth ministry volunteers, field-trip chaperones and drivers, Scout leaders, coaches and other recreation volunteers, Vacation Bible School volunteers, Children's Liturgy of the Word volunteers, pre-school volunteers, nursery volunteers*

**Volunteers Working with Children and Youth in Other Parish Programs/Ministries**

Volunteers for other parish programs or ministries who have been delegated care, custody, or control of children and youth are required to complete a criminal background check and participate in a *Protecting God's Children* training session. Duration of service does not mitigate compliance with this policy.

*Examples: Parish festival volunteers staffing activities for children/youth, volunteer choir director (if choir includes children and/or youth), service coordinators (if service programs include children or youth)*

**Other Parish Volunteers and Adults**

Although they are not required to do so by diocesan policy, the Diocese of Columbus strongly encourages all other parish volunteers to complete civilian criminal background checks and attend *Protecting God's Children* training sessions. All parents and other interested adults are encouraged to attend a *Protecting God's Children* training session. The safety of children and young people is best assured when all adults have been trained and understand how to build a safe environment for children.

*Examples: Lectors, ushers, festival workers, choir members, and so forth.*

### **Civilian Criminal Background Checks for New Clergy, Employees, Volunteers, and Applicants to Clerical Formation**

Civilian criminal background checks are completed through the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation (BCII) and must be completed by the first day of one's incardination (for a priest or deacon arriving to serve in this diocese from another diocese), employment, or service to the parish or school. Anyone formally applying to be a candidate for the priesthood or permanent diaconate must have a completed criminal background checks are completed through the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation (BCII) prior to acceptance into formal formation. Anyone who has not been a legal resident of Ohio for the past consecutive 5-years is required to complete a Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) civilian criminal background check. An FBI civilian criminal background check must at least be in process by the first day of one's employment or service to the parish or school.

Copies or transfers of completed civilian criminal background checks are only accepted from one parish or school in the Diocese of Columbus to another parish or school in the Diocese of Columbus. Copies of completed civilian background checks from individuals or other institutions are not acceptable.

A new background check must be conducted if a cleric, employee, volunteer, or clerical candidate has a significant (more than 1½ years) gap in their employment, service, or formation in the diocese.

Parishes and schools should exercise prudence when reviewing any offenses that are identified by a civilian criminal background check. Offenses that would prevent someone from serving in programs and ministries with children or youth include, but are not limited to:

- Abduction
- Aggravated assault
- Aggravated burglary
- Aggravated menacing
- Aggravated murder; specific intent to cause death
- Aggravated robbery
- Assault
- Burglary
- Carrying concealed weapons
- Child enticement
- Child stealing
- Compelling prostitution
- Contributing to the unruliness or delinquency of a child
- Corrupting another with drugs
- Corruption of a minor
- Disseminating matter harmful to juveniles
- Domestic violence

- Endangering children
- Failing to provide for functionally impaired person
- Felonious assault
- Felonious sexual penetration
- Funding of drug or marijuana trafficking
- Gross sexual imposition
- Having a weapon while under a disability
- Illegal administration or distribution of anabolic steroids
- Illegal manufacture of drugs or cultivation of marijuana
- Illegal use of a minor in nudity oriented material or performance
- Impositioning (now importuning)
- Improperly discharging a weapon at or near a school or dwelling
- Interference with custody
- Involuntary manslaughter
- Kidnapping
- Murder
- Pandering obscenity
- Pandering obscenity involving a minor
- Pandering sexually oriented matter involving a minor
- Patient abuse, neglect
- Placing harmful objects in food or confection
- Possession of drugs (that is not a minor drug possession offense)
- Procuring
- Promoting prostitution (children)
- Prostitution: after positive HIV test
- Public indecency
- Rape
- Robbery
- Sexual battery
- Sexual imposition
- Trafficking in drugs
- Unlawful abortion
- Voluntary manslaughter
- Voyeurism

### **Child Protection Training for Clergy, Employees, Volunteers, and Clergy Applicants**

Although it is preferable for new clergy, employees, volunteers, and clergy applicants to have attended a *Protecting God's Children* training session prior to working with children and youth, they have a grace period of up to 60 days from their start date to attend a *Protecting God's Children* training session. If this grace period is needed, supervisors are to verify that the new employee or volunteer is pre-registered for a scheduled *Protecting God's Children* session by the first day of their work with children or youth. Special care must be taken to ensure that short-term volunteers receive this training in a timely manner that will properly prepare them for their service.

The *Protecting God's Children* program includes not only information on the scope of child sexual abuse, but also contains a plan for its prevention at parishes and schools. Individuals that have attended child sexual abuse awareness programs from other institutions are still required to attend a *Protecting God's Children* training session unless he or she can provide documentation that the previously attended program covered the same subject material and the Chancery Office grants approval.

Persons that have participated in a *Protecting God's Children* program in another diocese can request that their former diocese transfer their training record to the Diocese of Columbus.

If an employee or volunteer moves from a parish or school in the Diocese of Columbus to another parish or school in the Diocese of Columbus, the new parish or school should notify the diocese to request that the training record of the employee or volunteer be transferred.

Due to the sensitive nature of the *Protecting God's Children* program, some victims of child sexual abuse may not feel comfortable attending a *Protecting God's Children* training session. Anyone in this particular situation may request to receive the materials needed for child protection training in an alternate way. These requests are made through the Safe Environment Program. All requests for alternate child protection training for victims of child sexual abuse are kept confidential.

### **Child Protection Continuing Education for Clergy and Other Personnel**

In addition to attending a *Protecting God's Children* training session, some clergy, employees, and volunteers are also required to receive continuing education for child sexual abuse prevention. This continuing education is provided in monthly training bulletins generated by VIRTUS. Persons in the following positions, whether paid or volunteer, are required to participate in this continuing education process: priests, deacons, seminarians, diaconate students, principals, assistant principals, directors or coordinators of religious education, and directors/coordinators of youth ministry. These individuals are encouraged to disseminate this information among their staff and volunteers.

Other individuals interested in participating in the continuing education process should contact the Safe Environment Program.

### **Authority to Interpret This Policy**

Interpreting of this policy in unique circumstances or its application in unclear situations shall be made by or at least receive the prior approval of the Vicar General or his delegate.



## **OFFICES OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS, RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, & YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY POLICIES**

### **OCE 4110.0**

#### **BACKGROUND CHECKS**

All paid school staff must have on file both BCI and FBI background checks and must attend “Protecting God’s Children.” All volunteers must have on file a BCI background check and must attend “Protecting God’s Children” no matter how much or how little contact they have with children or youth, no matter if volunteering for the school or parish, and no matter what time of the day or night they volunteer.

### **OCE 4113.0**

#### **LICENSURE/CERTIFICATION**

- A. All supervisors, principals, and teachers in the schools of the Diocese of Columbus shall hold appropriate license/certificate that is recognized and accepted by the Ohio Department of Education.
- B. Application for license issuance or renewal may be completed through the Ohio Department of Education website. The current Individual Professional Development Plan and an “LPDC Verification Form for Licensure” must be sent to the Local Professional Development Committee (LPDC), care of the School Personnel Assistant, along with a check or money order for processing, and all official transcripts or CEU credits required for license renewal. LPDC signatures will be required for renewal, and verification will be done online by the Superintendent or his designee.
- C. In each teacher’s file at the Diocesan Office of Catholic Schools, there should be a facsimile copy of the transcript of college credits and a copy of a current Ohio teaching license/certificate, verification of attendance at “Protecting God’s Children,” and verification of BCI and FBI background checks.
- D. At the beginning of each school year the principals of elementary and secondary schools shall send to the HR Assistant for Teacher Personnel a registration form filled out by each teacher, giving the address, telephone, experience, salary, date of birth, and State ID number and license expiration date.

### **OCE 4113.01**

#### **TEACHER AIDES**

Anyone assisting in a classroom on a regular basis that is a paid employee must have an Educational Aide Permit.

### **OCE 4113.02**

#### **PUPIL ACTIVITY PERMIT**

The State requires anyone, whether licensed or unlicensed, who directs, supervises, or coaches a program that involves athletes, routine or regular physical activity, or health and safety considerations to hold a Pupil Activity Permit.

#### **OCE 4113.05**

##### **LICENSURE AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

All licensed employees of the schools in the Diocese of Columbus are subject to the requirements outlined in “How to maintain Teaching Status in the Diocese of Columbus” on the Diocesan Website

([www.cdeducation.org/CatholicSchools/PersonnelEmploymentOpportunities/LPDC.aspx](http://www.cdeducation.org/CatholicSchools/PersonnelEmploymentOpportunities/LPDC.aspx)).

Failure to meet these standards according to the timeline established by the State of Ohio and/or the Diocesan Office of Catholic Schools voids any signed contractual agreement.

#### **OCE 4113.06**

##### **PERMANENT AND PERMANENT NON-TAX CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS**

All educators in the schools of the Diocese of Columbus who hold a permanent certificate or a permanent non-tax certificate are subject to the same renewal requirements as a teacher who holds a professional license. Failure to meet the timeline established by the Diocesan Office of Catholic Schools voids any signed contractual agreement.

#### **OCE 4116.12**

##### **EDUCATOR MISCONDUCT**

Ohio law requires school districts to report incidents of misconduct by a certificate or license holder to the Ohio Department of Education. The Diocesan Superintendent is to be contacted immediately upon the occurrence of any of the following:

- 1) An employee has pled guilty or been found guilty of, or is eligible for intervention or pre-trial diversion for, a criminal offense listed in Revised Code Sections 3391.31(B)(2) or (C), or Section 3319.39(B)(1) (which are generally felony offenses, misdemeanor sex offenses, and offenses of violence, theft, or drug abuse);
- 2) When termination or non-renewal occurs, or such proceedings are initiated because it is determined that an employee has committed an act that is unbecoming to the teaching profession or one of the criminal offenses listed above;
  - a) Conduct “unbecoming to the teaching profession” is described in the Ohio Department of Education Licensure Code of Professional Conduct for Ohio Educators, Section 3301-73-21 of the Ohio Administrative Code, and/or any other standards promulgated by the State or the Department.
  - b) The Department of Education Professional Conduct Code includes the failure to adhere to the following as conduct unbecoming to the profession:
    - behave in a professional manner;

- maintain a professional relationship with all students;
  - accurately report information required by the local board of education or governing board, state education agency, federal agency or state or federal law;
  - adhere to federal, state and local laws and statutes regarding criminal activity;
  - comply with state and federal laws related to maintaining confidential information;
  - serve as positive role models and refrain from using, possessing or unlawfully distributing illegal or unauthorized drugs;
  - ensure that school property, public funds or fees paid by students or the community are used in the best interest of students and not for personal gain;
  - fulfill all of the terms and obligations in their employment contract.
- c) Factors that may be considered when evaluating conduct unbecoming to the person's position include:
- crimes or misconduct involving minors or school children;
  - crimes or misconduct involving academic fraud;
  - making, or causing to be made, any false or misleading statement or concealing a material fact in obtaining issuance or renewal of any licensing documents;
  - crimes or misconduct involving the school community;
  - a plea of guilty to, a finding of guilt, or a conviction to any offense enumerated under Section 3319.39 of the Revised Code;
  - a violation of the terms and conditions of a consent agreement with the State Board of Education;
  - any other crimes or misconduct that negatively reflect upon the teaching profession (See OAC 3301-73-21).
- 3) An employee has resigned under threat of termination or non-renewal for criminal acts or acts unbecoming to the teaching profession; and
- 4) An employee has resigned during the course of an investigation of alleged educator misconduct.

The Office of Catholic Schools expects that teachers employed in its schools will abide by all licensure and applicable requirements, as they exist from time to time, and that the Office and schools will comply with the misconduct reporting requirements issued by the State.

## **OYYAM 200.20**

### **REPORTING ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

Child abuse is any non-accidental action that harms a child – whether physical, emotional, sexual or by neglect. That includes, but is not limited to:

- Engaging in sexual activity with a child;
- Denial of proper or necessary subsistence, education, medical care, or other care necessary for the child's health;
- Use of restraint procedures on a child that cause injury or pain;

- Administration of prescription drugs or medication without the ongoing supervision of a licensed physician;
- Providing alcoholic beverages or controlled substances;
- Commission of any act, other than by accident that threatens or results in any injury or in death to the child.

Every member of the youth ministry team and parish staff shall immediately report any suspected case of child abuse and/or neglect. In the State of Ohio, reports of child abuse/neglect are made to the county agencies of the Department of Job and Family Services/Public Children Services.

The following are the contact numbers for reporting child abuse in the 23 counties of the Diocese of Columbus:

- Coshocton County: (740) 622-1020
- Delaware County: (740) 833-2300
- Fairfield County: (740) 653-4060
- Fayette County: (740) 335-0350
- Franklin County: (614) 229-7000
- Hardin County: (419) 675-1130
- Hocking County: (740) 385-4168
- Holmes County: (330) 674-1111
- Jackson County: (740) 286-4181
- Knox County: (740) 392-5437
- Licking County: (740) 349-6333
- Madison County: (740) 852-4770
- Marion County: (740) 389-2317
- Morrow County: (419) 947-9111
- Muskingum County: (740) 455-6710
- Perry County: (740) 342-3836
- Pickaway County: (740) 474-3105
- Pike County: (740) 947-5080
- Ross County: (740) 702-4453
- Scioto County: (740) 456-4164
- Tuscarawas County: (330) 339-7791
- Union County: (937) 644-1010
- Vinton County: (740) 596-2571

If a county agency is unavailable for any reason, the county sheriff's office is always available for assistance. In the case of an emergency, please call 911.

In addition to contacting the appropriate county agency, any allegation of sexual abuse of a minor by a priest, deacon or other Church personnel shall also be immediately reported to the Diocesan Victims' Assistance Coordinator, the Rev. Msgr. Stephan J. Moloney, toll-free at 1-614-224-2251 or [helpisavailable@columbuscatholic.org](mailto:helpisavailable@columbuscatholic.org).

It is the goal of the Diocese of Columbus to make the Church a place of safety: A place of prayer, ministry, and comfort. Everyone who enters our churches, schools, or facilities must be confident in this. Not one child or young person should suffer from abuse while at Church. In order to assure the safety of our children and young people, the Diocese of Columbus has enacted a complete program of protection. As part of this program, the Diocese of Columbus will provide appropriate, just, and pastoral care for anyone who has suffered the crime of sexual abuse of a minor at the hands of diocesan clergy or church employees or volunteers. The Diocese of Columbus will report any and all allegations of abuse reported to it to the authorities and will cooperate fully with those authorities.

Each parish must have a copy of the diocesan policy and procedures for addressing allegations of sexual abuse of minors by priests or deacons and have it readily available for parishioners and staff.

### **OYYAM 200.30**

#### **ADULT CHAPERONES FOR YOUTH ACTIVITIES**

Parishes must follow a strategy of “two-deep” ministry with adolescents, where at least two adults are present at all youth ministry activities and situations, wherever possible.

Where a one-to-one activity is required (e.g. counseling), such activities should take place in an open environment. Special attention should be given to provide a safe and confidential forum while following standards of prudence.

Adult chaperones for youth activities must be at least 21 years of age.

For youth ministry activities away from parish property, a ratio of one adult per ten youths must be followed. For overnight activities, a ratio of one adult per six youths must be followed. The ratio of male-to-female chaperones should closely parallel the ratio of male-to-female youths at an activity. This is particularly important for overnight activities.

For overnight activities where private rooms are used, an adult chaperone must never share a room with a youth. (Except where a parent is serving as a chaperone and there are no other persons sharing the room.)

No adult chaperone should ever enter a youth’s room unless it is absolutely necessary. If circumstances require it, the chaperone must be accompanied by another adult and the door must remain open the entire time the adults are present. Both adult chaperones should be of the same sex as the youth(s) in the room. If this is not possible, one male and one female chaperone may be used.

A youth must never be invited or instructed to enter the room of an adult chaperone.

Adopted 02/03

**OREC 2213.0**

**OYYAM 200.40**

**CODE OF CONDUCT FOR CATECHETICAL LEADERS/COORDINATORS OF YOUTH MINISTRY**

1. Ecclesial & Theological

- a) Coordinators of youth ministry work collaboratively with the pastor (and/or other supervisors) and associates in ministry.
- b) Coordinators of youth ministry faithfully represent and practice the teachings of the Catholic Church with integrity in word and action.
- c) Coordinators of youth ministry are competent and receive education and training commensurate with their role(s) and responsibilities (§ 231, Code of Canon Law).
- d) Coordinators of youth ministry respect the diversity of spiritualities in the faith community and will not make their own personal form of spirituality normative.

2. Inclusion

- a) Coordinators of youth ministry recognize the dignity of each person and refrain from behaviors or words that are disrespectful of anyone or any group.
- b) Coordinators of youth ministry serve all people without regard to gender, national origin, age, marital status, socioeconomic status, or political beliefs.
- c) Coordinators of youth ministry act to ensure all persons have access to the resources, services and opportunities they require with particular regard for persons with special needs or disabilities.

3. Accountability

- a) Coordinators of youth ministry are accountable to the pastor or other duly appointed representative, under the authority of the diocesan bishop.
- b) Coordinators of youth ministry are called to serve the faith community, carrying out their ministry "...conscientiously, zealously, and diligently" (§ 231, Code of Canon Law.)
- c) Coordinators of youth ministry exercise responsible stewardship of resources while holding themselves to the highest standards of integrity regarding fiscal matters placed in their trust.

4. Confidentiality

- a) Coordinators of youth ministry respect confidentiality, yet are not held to confidentiality in the same way as ordained ministers and licensed, certified counselors.
- b) Coordinators of youth ministry adhere to civil and ecclesial law concerning the reporting of neglect, abuse or when physical harm could come to the person or to a third party.
- c) Coordinators of youth ministry support the rights and roles of parents while ministering to the needs and concerns of adolescents.

5. Conduct

- a) Coordinators of youth ministry are aware they have considerable personal power because of their ministerial position. Therefore, they will sustain respectful ministerial relationships, avoiding manipulation and other abuses of power.
- b) Physical, sexual, or romantic relationships between a coordinator of youth ministry and an adolescent are unethical and are prohibited.

- c) Coordinators of youth ministry model healthy and positive behaviors with adolescents.
- d) Procuring, providing, or using alcohol and/or controlled substances for or with adolescents is unethical and is prohibited.

6. Referrals and Intervention

- a) Coordinators of youth ministry are aware of the signs of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse and neglect.
- b) Coordinators of youth ministry are aware of their limitations with respect to paraprofessional counseling and make appropriate referrals.
- c) Coordinators of youth ministry adhere to civil and ecclesial law, policy and procedure for reporting abuse, suspected abuse or neglect.

7. Parish/Diocesan Policies

- a) Coordinators of youth ministry are aware of and comply with all applicable parish, organizational and/or diocesan policies with special attention to sexual misconduct, safety, transportation, parental permission, and medical emergency policies.

I have read and understand the above code of ethics and commit to uphold this code in my ministry.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**OREC 4116.14**

**OYYAM 200.41**

**CODE OF CONDUCT FOR CATECHISTS/YOUTH MINISTRY TEAM MEMBERS**

- Youth ministry team members work collaboratively with the pastor, coordinator of youth ministry (and/or other supervisors) and associates in ministry.
- Youth ministry team members faithfully represent and practice the teachings of the Catholic Church with integrity in word and action.
- Youth ministry team members are competent and receive education and training commensurate with their role(s) and responsibilities (§ 231, Code of Canon Law.)
- Youth ministry team members respect the diversity of spiritualities in the faith community and will not make their own personal form of spirituality normative.
- Youth ministry team members recognize the dignity of each person and refrain from behaviors or words that are disrespectful of anyone or any group.
- Youth ministry team members serve all people without regard to gender, national origin, age, marital status, socioeconomic status, or political beliefs.
- Youth ministry team members act to ensure all persons have access to the resources, services and opportunities they require with particular regard for persons with special needs or

disabilities.

- Youth ministry team members are accountable to the pastor, coordinator of youth ministry, or other duly appointed representative, under the authority of the diocesan bishop.
- Youth ministry team members are called to serve the faith community, carrying out their ministry “...conscientiously, zealously, and diligently” (§ 231, Code of Canon Law.)
- Youth ministry team members exercise responsible stewardship of resources while holding themselves to the highest standards of integrity regarding fiscal matters placed in their trust.
- Youth ministry team members respect confidentiality, yet are not held to confidentiality in the same way as ordained ministers and licensed, certified counselors.
- Youth ministry team members adhere to civil and ecclesial law concerning the reporting of neglect, abuse or when physical harm could come to the person or to a third party.
- Youth ministry team members support the rights and roles of parents while ministering to the needs and concerns of adolescents.
- Youth ministry team members are aware they have considerable personal power because of their ministerial position. Therefore, they will sustain respectful ministerial relationships, avoiding manipulation and other abuses of power.
- Physical, sexual, or romantic relationships between a youth ministry team member and an adolescent are unethical and are prohibited.
- Youth ministry team members model healthy and positive behaviors with adolescents.
- Procuring, providing, or using alcohol and/or controlled substances for or with adolescents is unethical and is prohibited.
- Youth ministry team members are aware of the signs of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse and neglect.
- Youth ministry team members are aware of their limitations with respect to paraprofessional counseling and make appropriate referrals.
- Youth ministry team members adhere to civil and ecclesial law, policy and procedure for reporting abuse, suspected abuse or neglect.
- Youth ministry team members are aware of and comply with all applicable parish, organizational and/or diocesan policies with special attention to sexual misconduct, safety, transportation, parental permission, and medical emergency policies.

I have read and understand the above code of ethics and commit to uphold this code in my



ministry.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**OYYAM 200.42**

**YOUTH BEHAVIOR AND CODE OF CONDUCT**

Each youth ministry program should develop, publish, and update on a regular basis a code of conduct for participants. The code shall specify expectations for youth behavior. It should also indicate procedures, corrective measures, and penalties that the program may use for violations of these expectations. The code must safeguard the youth’s right to due process.

Behavior is the manner in which one acts. Since the essence of Christian discipline is self discipline, youth must be free to choose one form of behavior over another. In choosing to behave or misbehave a youth takes upon him/herself the consequences of that chosen behavior.

1. In establishing a code of conduct the program shall:
  - a) ensure that the rules and consequences are understood by the youth
  - b) ensure that the punishments are pastorally constructive and relative to the misbehavior
  - c) encourage reconciliation with the offended party if applicable
2. Youth ministry team members shall uphold the code of conduct established for the program and follow the expectations, procedures, corrective measures and penalties regarding the program’s rules.
3. Youth ministry team members shall be responsible for establishing an environment in which youth receive continuing instruction regarding acceptable behavior.
4. Since the Church supports the dignity of persons of all ages, corporal punishment in any form is never an acceptable form of punishment.
5. A person may use a physical response to “obtain possession of weapons or dangerous objects upon the person or within the control of the pupil, for the purpose of self- defense, or for the protection of persons or property.” (Ohio Law 3319.41)

The code of conduct should be made available to youth participants, parent (s), or guardian (s) and the youth ministry team.

**OYYAM 200.43**

**DISSEMINATION OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT**

Each youth ministry program shall make the parish community aware of the code of conduct for employees and volunteers and make this code of conduct readily available to any interested parishioner.

**OYYAM 200.61**

## **YOUTH MINISTRY GATHERINGS AT PRIVATE RESIDENCES**

Many well-intentioned employees and volunteers have a desire to open their homes to young people. Even with the best of intentions, this would put young people at risk by making it acceptable in the mind of a young person to enter the residence of an adult. This could later be exploited by another adult whose intentions are not altruistic.

It is the policy of the Catholic Diocese of Columbus that no parish or school sponsored youth ministry gatherings, events, or activities take place at private residences.

This policy is designed to protect both young people and adult youth ministry leaders. It ensures accessibility and transparency of our youth ministry programs and helps establish a safe environment for everyone involved.

### **OYYAM 200.70**

#### **PARENTAL OBSERVATION AND OTHER VISITORS**

Parents must be welcomed to observe all youth activities sponsored by the parish. While efforts should be made to create an environment where youth are comfortable expressing themselves, "...the right and duty of the parents to educate their children are primordial and inalienable." (CCC 2221) Parents should never be denied the right to observe programs in which their children participate.

In an effort to provide a safe environment for all students, each parish shall have a written policy detailing the procedures visitors must follow when visiting a program. This policy must minimally address the following elements:

1. Sign-in procedures,
2. Advance notice necessary to observe an activity,
3. Procedure for accompanying the visitor to and from observation area.

### **OYYAM 200.80**

#### **HEALTH AND SAFETY OF YOUTH**

Each youth ministry program shall provide an organized program of health services designed to identify problems and coordinate health resources of the local community. Minimally the health services of the programs shall include:

- a) Procedures for dealing with immediate treatment of youth in cases of emergency. these procedures shall include providing the parent (s) or guardian (s) of youth with a written form for authorizing emergency medical treatment.
- b) Procedures for emergency situations: fire drills, or rapid dismissals, and tornado drills.
- c) Records of fire drills and seasonal tornado drills.
- d) Emergency procedures posted in meeting rooms and available to parents, youth, and youth ministry team members.
- e) Emergency telephone numbers posted by office telephones.
- f) Supervision of parish grounds, recreational areas, and other facilities when scheduled for use by youth.

- g) First aid facilities and materials.
- h) Keeping a file of written incident reports.

**OYYAM 200.81**

**THREATS TO WELFARE AND SAFETY**

No youth will use, possess, handle, transmit or conceal any object which is or can be considered a weapon or instrument of violence. Objects which are explosive or incendiary in nature, or any object reasonably determined to be a threat to the safety or security of any person, are prohibited on parish premises, and at youth ministry functions.

**OCE 5140.2**

**OYYAM 200.82**

**BULLYING**

The Diocese of Columbus youth ministry programs and their youth ministry teams shall not tolerate any bullying on parish grounds or at any program activity on or off site.

Bullying is a pattern of abuse over time and involves a student being “picked on”. Bullying includes physical intimidation or assault; extortion; oral or written threats; teasing; putdowns; name-calling; threatening looks, gestures, or actions; cruel rumors; false accusations; and social isolation.

The diocese expects youth ministry team members who observe or become aware of an act of bullying to take immediate, appropriate steps to intervene. If a team member believes that his/her intervention has not resolved the matter, or if the bullying persists, he/she shall report to the coordinator of youth ministry for further investigation.

The diocese expects youth and parents who become aware of an act of bullying on parish grounds or at any program activity on or off site to report it to the coordinator for further investigation. The coordinator will contact parents of the aggressor and the victim. This investigation may include interviews with youth, parents, team members, parish staff, and reviewing records.

Consequences for youth who bully others should include counseling, parent conference, and/or suspension from activities depending on the results of the investigation.

No retaliation shall be taken against a person who reports bullying.

**Schools shall have a policy on bullying, which incorporates the essentials of this policy, printed in their parent/student handbook.**

**OCE 4116.15**

**OREC 4116.15**

**OYYAM 300.30**

## HARASSMENT POLICY FOR EMPLOYEES AND ADULT VOLUNTEERS

1. Harassment can take many forms. Harassment can occur at any parish activity, and/or can take place in classrooms, halls, cafeterias, gymnasiums, or even at programs sponsored by the parish at other locations. It does not include compliments of a socially acceptable nature. Harassment is verbal or physical conduct that embarrasses, denigrates, or shows hostility toward a person because of his/her race, color, religion, gender, sex, national origin, age or disability or other protected characteristics.

It is the policy of the Diocese of Columbus to maintain a spiritually enriching environment, in all programs and activities, free of all forms of harassment and intimidation. **No youth participant, volunteer adult leader, or parish staff member - male or female - should be subject to unlawful harassment in any form, and specifically not to unsolicited and/or unwelcome sexual overtures or conduct, either verbal or physical.**

2. Conduct which constitutes sexual harassment is prohibited. Sexual harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
  - Offensive sexual flirtations, advances, propositions;
  - Continued or repeated verbal abuse of a sexual or gender-based nature;
  - Explicit or degrading sexual or gender-based comments about another individual or his or her appearance;
  - The display or circulation of sexually explicit or suggestive writing, pictures or objects;
  - Any offensive or physical conduct which shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of gender or sex;
  - Graffiti of a sexual nature;
  - Fondling oneself sexually or talking about one's sexual activity in front of others;
  - Spreading rumors about or categorizing others as to sexual activity.
3. Sexual harassment is not limited to conduct that is sexual in nature - it also includes harassment that is based on **gender**. Gender-based harassment, which is also prohibited, is conduct that would not occur except for the sex of the person involved. An example would be referring to a woman by or as a female body part, or a demeaning sex-based term, or treating people differently because of their gender. The same prohibitions apply with regard to inflammatory or offensive comments or conduct which are based upon race, color, age, religion, disability, or national origin. In short, working relationships between employees and volunteers must be based on mutual respect.

Sexual harassment also includes the taking of, or refusal to take, any personnel or other action on the basis of a person's submission to or refusal of sexual overtures. No person should so much as imply that an individual's "cooperation" or submission to unwelcome sexual activity will have any effect on the individual's employment, assignment, compensation, advancement, development, program evaluation, participation in parish programs or activities, or any other condition of employment or achievement.

Not all physical conduct is necessarily considered sexual in nature. (For example, a coach hugging a student after an accomplishment, a youth minister consoling an adolescent with an

injury or physical conduct during athletic events would not be considered sexual conduct.) However, peer-based sexual harassment is a form of prohibited conduct where the harassing conduct creates a hostile environment.

4. A sexually hostile environment can be created by a parish employee, volunteer, youth participant, or visitor to the parish activity.
5. Any person who believes he/she was subjected to unlawful harassment or intimidation must contact either the (a) program administrator, (b) pastor, or (c) diocesan director of youth and young adult ministry. A complaint must be filed in writing. In the event that an individual alleges harassment by a program administrator or a pastor, the individual may file the complaint with the diocesan director of youth and young adult ministry. All complaints will be promptly investigated, and the person initiating the complaint will be advised of the outcome of the investigation.
6. Where it is determined that harassment has occurred, the appropriate authority will take immediate disciplinary action against any program administrator, volunteer, or staff engaging in harassment. The response shall take into account the individuals and circumstances. Such action may include, depending on the circumstances, disciplinary measures up to and including termination of services.
7. No retaliation against anyone who reports harassment will be tolerated. The diocese prohibits such retaliation and will take appropriate responsive action if retaliation occurs.

### **PARISH RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Periodically each parish shall give staff and volunteers a copy of the Harassment Policy. It is recommended that a Harassment Policy Verification Form be signed and returned.
2. Each parish program shall follow diocesan procedures for timely investigation and response to complaints.
3. Each parish shall periodically train program administrators, staff and volunteers to ensure that they understand which types of behavior constitute harassment, the prevention of harassment, and how they should respond in the event of experiencing such behavior. Records are to be kept of training dates and names of those in attendance.
4. Each parish program shall include the Harassment Policy in materials distributed to the program's staff/volunteers.

### **HARASSMENT POLICY VERIFICATION FORM**

I, \_\_\_\_\_,  
please print your name

(check one)

An employee of \_\_\_\_\_

An adult volunteer at \_\_\_\_\_

A parent/guardian of a youth participant

have received copies of the diocesan policy on harassment. I understand that it is necessary that any complaint of harassment must be filed in writing with the (a) program administrator, (b) pastor or (c) diocesan director of youth and young adult ministry. I have had an opportunity to read the policy and am confident I understand the content and purpose.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of parish and program

\_\_\_\_\_  
Your signature

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**OCE 4116.16**

**SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES - HARASSMENT**

1. Annually each school shall give teachers, staff and volunteers a copy of the Diocesan Personnel Harassment Policy - 4116.15.
2. Each school shall follow Diocesan Policy for timely investigation and response to complaints.
3. Each school shall train administrators, teachers, staff and volunteers to ensure that they understand which types of behavior constitute harassment, the prevention of harassment, and how they should respond in the event of experiencing such behavior. Records are to be kept of training dates and names of those in attendance.
4. Each school shall include the Diocesan Harassment Policy for Personnel in the school's faculty handbook.
5. A signed acknowledgement of receipt of the policy can be done on a separate form or in conjunction with the sign off form for the handbook.

**HARASSMENT POLICY VERIFICATION FORM**

I, \_\_\_\_\_,  
please print your name

(check one)

An employee of \_\_\_\_\_

- An adult volunteer at \_\_\_\_\_
- A parent/guardian of a youth participant

have received copies of the diocesan policy on harassment. I understand that it is necessary that any complaint of harassment must be filed in writing with the (a) program administrator, (b) pastor or (c) diocesan director of youth and young adult ministry. I have had an opportunity to read the policy and am confident I understand the content and purpose.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of parish and program

\_\_\_\_\_  
Your signature

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**OCE 4116.17**

**FILING OF HARASSMENT INFORMATION**

1. The investigator (principal, assistant principal, pastor, or superintendent) must keep extensive notes of all aspects of the investigation as outlined in process packet provided by the diocesan legal counsel.
2. These notes must include what the investigator did, what the investigator concluded, and how the investigator followed up as a result of the findings and conclusion.
3. These notes must include any verbal statements made by persons questioned and any written statements.
4. All of the above details must be summarized to include a) how the investigation was conducted, b) what conclusion was reached and why, c) what action was taken, and d) how, when and to whom the conclusion was communicated and the warning against retaliation was given (Diocese of Columbus Administrative Summary Form).
5. All of the above is kept only in the investigator's file.
6. If no action is taken, nothing is placed in the accused or the complainant's file. If an action is taken against the accused (i.e., warning, restrictions, leave, or release from contract in the case of personnel), the action taken is a) formalized by putting in writing, b) a copy is given to the person against whom the action is taken, and c) a copy is placed in the personnel file.

**OCE 5140.0**

**STUDENT ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

By law it is the responsibility of each professional staff member to report immediately to the appropriate community agency any suspected case of child abuse and/or neglect (Ohio Revised

Code 2151.421). The professional staff member shall also notify the building principal about the referral.

**OCE 5140.05/5140.06**

**OREC 5140.05**

**OYYAM 300.31**

## **HARASSMENT POLICY FOR STUDENTS, CHILDREN, YOUTH, & ADOLESCENT VOLUNTEERS**

1. **Harassment** is defined as verbal or physical conduct that embarrasses cuts down, or shows hostility toward a person because of his or her race, color, religion, gender, sex, national origin, age or disability (and other characteristics protected by law).

Harassment can take many forms and can occur at any parish activity. It can take place in classrooms, halls, cafeterias, gymnasiums, or even at youth programs off-site.

It is the policy of the Diocese of Columbus to maintain a safe environment free from all forms of harassment and intimidation. No one (youth or adult) should be subject to unlawful harassment in any form, and specifically not to unwelcome sexual overtures or conduct of any kind.

2. **Sexual harassment** is unwelcome attention of a sexual nature. It may take different forms, including:
  - Inappropriate touching (brushing up against, grabbing, patting, or pinching in a sexual manner.)
  - Making comments about a person's body, clothing, or sexual behavior
  - Spreading sexual rumors about someone
  - Continually asking someone out when they have communicated a lack of interest
  - Making sexual jokes, gestures, or remarks (in person or in "cyberspace" – instant messaging, e-mail, chat rooms, etc)
  - Intimidation (blocking or cornering someone in a sexual way)
  - Assault (pulling clothing off or down, forcing someone to do something sexual such as kissing)
  - Fondling oneself sexually or talking about one's sexual activity in front of others
3. **Gender Harassment.** Sex harassment is not limited to conduct that is sexual in nature; it also includes harassment that is based on a person's gender. An example would be referring to a girl by a female body part or a demeaning sex-based term. This behavior is prohibited. Treating people differently because of their gender is prohibited.
4. **Hostile environment harassment** occurs when unwelcome sexual conduct is so severe and pervasive (repeated) that it limits a person's ability to benefit from or enjoy the parish program or activity. A sexually hostile environment can be created by anyone: a parish employee, adult volunteer, youth volunteer, youth participant or a visitor to the parish activity.



5. If a youth sees harassment of any kind occurring (no matter who the harasser is—student, visitor, catechist, etc.,) they should immediately tell a trusted adult staff member or volunteer so that they can intervene and begin the appropriate reporting steps as outlined in diocesan policy.
6. If a youth believes he/she is a victim of sexual harassment, he should tell a trusted adult (youth minister, pastor, director of religious education or a parent) to file a formal complaint.
7. Symptoms of a victim of sexual harassment may include:
  - Feel angry, embarrassed, frustrated, scared or depressed
  - Feel hopeless to stop the harassment
  - Not feel good about yourself
  - Fear that your reputation will be destroyed
  - Go out of your way to avoid the harasser(s)
  - Experience headaches, stomach aches, or sleeping or eating problems because of the stress caused by the harassment
8. Where it is determined that harassment has occurred, the appropriate authority will take immediate disciplinary action as outlined in diocesan policy.
9. Retaliation against or “getting even” with anyone who reports harassment will not be tolerated. The diocese prohibits such retaliation and will take appropriate responsive action if retaliation occurs.

## **PARISH RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Periodically each parish shall give staff and volunteers a copy of the Harassment Policy. It is recommended that a Harassment Policy Verification Form be signed and returned.
2. Each parish program shall follow diocesan procedures for timely investigation and response to complaints.
3. Each parish shall periodically train program administrators, staff and volunteers to ensure that they understand which types of behavior constitute harassment, the prevention of harassment, and how they should respond in the event of experiencing such behavior. Records are to be kept of training dates and names of those in attendance.
4. Each parish program shall include the Harassment Policy in materials distributed to the program’s staff/volunteers.

### **Harassment Policy for Youth and Adolescent Volunteers Verification Form**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ a youth participant or volunteer with \_\_\_\_\_  
 please print your name name of parish/school

have received and read the diocesan Harassment Policy for Youth and Adolescent Volunteers. I understand that:

- Harassment is defined as verbal or physical conduct that embarrasses, cuts down, or shows hostility toward a person because of his/her race, color, religion, gender, sex, national origin, age or disability.
- Sexual harassment is unwelcome attention of a sexual nature.
- Gender harassment is based on a person's gender. An example would be referring to a girl by a female body part.
- Hostile environment is when unwelcome sexual conduct is so severe and pervasive that it limits a person's ability to benefit from a parish activity
- Sexual harassment is against the law and against diocesan policy.
- Retaliation (getting even with) someone who reports harassment is against the law and against diocesan policy.

If I am a victim of harassment, I can tell a trusted adult without fear of retaliation or getting into trouble.

I agree to not participate in any form of harassment while I volunteer or participate in parish/school activities.

I agree to immediately report any harassment I may witness to a trusted adult leader in my parish program so that they may take the appropriate actions.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of parish activity \_\_\_\_\_

### **OCE 5140.07**

#### **HARASSMENT - SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Annually, at the start of each school year, the school shall publish the Diocesan Harassment Policy for Students (5140.05) in the parent/student handbook.
2. Each school shall follow diocesan procedures for timely investigation and response to complaints. (Refer to policy 5140.05)
3. Each school shall periodically train administrators, teachers, staff, and volunteers and use age appropriate classroom information for students to ensure that they understand which types of behavior constitute harassment and how they should respond in the event of experiencing such behavior. Records are to be kept of training dates and names of those in attendance.

### **OCE 5140.1**

#### **STUDENTS' HEALTH AND SAFETY PROCEDURES**

Each school shall have organized procedures pertaining to the health services designed to identify problems and coordinate health resources of the school and local community.

#### **Health Plan Procedures shall minimally include:**

1. compliance with the requirements for immunization as stated in the most recent revision of the Ohio Revised Code;

2. screening procedures for purposes of identifying students who have problems with vision, hearing, and scoliosis, and making related referrals;
3. first aid facilities and materials;
4. procedures for dealing with immediate treatment of students in cases of emergency;
5. a written form authorizing emergency medical treatment signed by a parent/guardian;
6. a file of written incident reports;
7. incidents that have possible liability shall be forwarded to the superintendent.

**Emergency Procedures shall include:**

1. regularly scheduled fire drills, rapid dismissals, tornado drills, school evacuation and lock down;
2. records of monthly fire drills and seasonal tornado drills;
3. records of rapid dismissal and lock down drills;
4. emergency procedures posted in classrooms and available to parents, students, and school personnel;
5. emergency telephone numbers posted by office telephones; and
6. supervision of school grounds, play areas, and other facilities when scheduled for use by students;
7. crisis management plan.

**OCE 5140.11**

**THREATS TO WELFARE AND SAFETY**

No student shall use, possess, handle, transmit or conceal any object which is, or can be considered, a weapon or instrument of violence. Objects which are explosive or incendiary in nature, or any object reasonably determined to be a threat to the safety or security of any person, are prohibited on school premises, and at school-related functions. See regulation 5140.12 for disciplinary actions regarding this policy.

**OCE 5140.12**

**CONSEQUENCES OF THREATS TO WELFARE AND SAFETY**

If a student is found to be in violation of Policy 5140.11, any or all of the disciplinary actions listed below may be imposed by the administrator, depending on the severity of the offense as well as the previous disciplinary record of the student. Consequences may include:

1. detention;
2. counseling/family counseling;
3. approved school/community service;
4. in-school suspension;
5. referral to Juvenile Court and/or other appropriate law enforcement agency;
6. suspension from school;
7. expulsion from school following suspension; and
8. diversion programs

**OCE 5140.13**

**SCHOOL CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Each school will develop, print, distribute, and implement a plan to address school safety. A copy of this current plan will be on file with the Office of Catholic Schools. The plan will be

reflective of the involvement of appropriate stakeholders and in coordination with local community services.

## **OCE 5144.0**

### **BEHAVIOR**

Behavior is the manner in which one acts. Since the essence of Christian discipline is self-discipline, the student must be free to choose one form of behavior over another. In choosing to behave or to misbehave, the student takes upon himself/herself the consequences of that chosen behavior.

Teachers shall uphold the code of conduct established for the school and follow the expectations, procedures, corrective measures, and penalties regarding the school's rules.

Teacher shall also be responsible for establishing a classroom environment in which students receive continuing instruction regarding acceptable behavior.

The Catholic Church respects the dignity of persons of all ages; therefore, corporal punishment in any form is not an acceptable form of punishment for student misbehavior.

However, a person employed or engaged as a teacher, principal, or administrator in a school in the Diocese of Columbus may use a physical response to "obtain possession of weapons or dangerous objects upon the person or within the control of the pupil, for the purpose of self-defense or for the protection of persons or property (Ohio Law 3319.41)."

See also: Code of Conduct Policy 5144.1  
Suspension and Expulsion Policy 5114.0

## **OCE 5144.1**

### **SCHOOL CODE OF CONDUCT**

Each school shall develop, publish, and update a code of conduct for students on a regular basis. This code shall specify expectations for student attendance (Policy 5113.0 and 5113.1) and behavior (Policy 5144.0). It shall indicate procedures, corrective measures, and penalties that the school may use for violations of its rules.

In establishing the code of conduct, the school shall:

1. safeguard the student's rights to due process;
2. ensure that the rules and consequences are understandable by the students;
3. ensure that the consequences are constructive and relative to the misbehavior or that academic credit is not denied except in cases of academic violations, e.g., cheating, plagiarism;
4. ensure that work of an academic nature is not used as a consequence; and
5. encourage reconciliation with the offended party(ies), if applicable.

The school's code of conduct shall be distributed annually to students, parents(s)/ guardian(s) and the school staff in written form (and on the school website, if appropriate). The signatures of

students, parents(s)/guardian(s), and teachers indicating acceptance of the code are required annually and shall be maintained in the school office.

### **OCE 5144.3**

#### **BEHAVIOR OFF CAMPUS**

The following is to be included in all school handbooks:

The Diocese of Columbus has a concern with conduct by students at school or away from school that may bring discredit or harm to the name of the school or the reputation of the student body. Consequently, conduct at school or away from school that is inappropriate to Christian moral standards, conduct that is in violation of the law, conduct that is detrimental to the common good, threatening, harmful, or offensive to other students or staff or conduct that is of such nature as to jeopardize the good name of the school, may subject a student to discipline. Discipline for such conduct shall be at the sole discretion of the school.

### **OREC 4110.01**

#### **CURRICULUM SUPPORT FOR PROTECTING GOD’S CHILDREN**

Operating standards for all schools in the State of Ohio require that personal safety and assault prevention be taught in grades kindergarten through six. Operating standards for the Ohio Catholic Schools Accrediting Association have the same requirements. The Diocese of Columbus implements this requirement through the Religion Course of Study in schools and Parish Schools of Religion. In addition, in Catholic schools, standards in the Course of Study for Health provide additional opportunities for instruction.

#### **Religion Course of Study**

**Introduction:** The tasks, topics, and grade level standards are from the *Religion Course of Study*

#### **Task:**

- III. Catechesis Promotes Moral Formation in Jesus Christ
- V. Catechesis Prepares the Christian to Live in Community and to Participate in the Life & Mission of the Church.

#### **Topics and Standards related to sexuality and personal safety in the Religion Course of Study**

##### **Gospel of Life (III.F)**

- God created all things good, out of love for all peoples
- Every person has inherent dignity because he/ she is made in God’s image, with an intellect and free will
- All life is sacred from conception to natural death
- Care and respect for oneself and of others is the proper response to God’s love
- Every person is created with a body and a soul—we respect and care for the whole person
- God created the world, its resources and all creatures. We are obligated to be good stewards of creation

- Human dignity can be destroyed through bullying, cheating, gossip, lies, prejudice, slander, stealing, etc
- All actions, both public and private, must strive to promote human dignity for all people
- Human work is a participation in God's creative work and essential to human dignity
- The first principle of Catholic Social Teaching is the promotion of the dignity of the human person

### **Living a Moral Life (III.G)**

- Jesus is the preeminent example of loving God and others
- God gives each person grace and particular gifts to live as a disciple of Christ
- God gives an intellect and free will to all people to use to make sound moral decisions
- Virtues are good habits that help all to live moral lives
- Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy are expressions of our love for God and others
- Know that one's behavior bears witness to one's faith
- In spite of inevitable human weakness and failures, all Christians are called to live a virtuous life each day

### **Spiritual Growth (V.A)**

- Holiness is a gift from God, which all are called to grow in throughout their lifetime
- Participation in the sacraments and community life support spiritual growth
- Practicing the virtues and establishing good habits enable one to grow in relationship with God, self and others
- Prayer and a life of study assist one in spiritual and moral growth
- Discipleship is living a life of virtue and service

### **Relationships and Responsibilities (V.B)**

- God calls all of us to love each other as Jesus did
- Feelings are natural but are not the sole guide to our actions
- Understand the nature and responsibilities of Christian friendship
- Know that the Ten Commandments and the doctrines of the Church are guides for action
- Know how values and virtues are vital to forming right relationships
- Understand the Church's teaching on the purpose of the Common Good and our individual and collective responsibilities to promote it

### **Marriage and Family Life-**

#### **Domestic Church (V.C)**

- Family is a special gift from God in which all members are called to care for one another
- Understand the concept that family is a domestic church—a place of faith, hope and charity
- God made men and women equal in dignity
- Human sexuality is a gift from God
- Families cooperate in God's work of creation by raising and educating children in the faith
- Marriage is a sacrament between one man and one woman that is intended to be permanent and fruitful
- Understand the role of mutual love and respect the responsibilities of spouses toward each other and their children

## **Health Course of Study**

### **Strand: Safety**

#### **Grade Level Standards**

- Understand “stranger danger” (K.PES.6)
- Know the difference between “good” and “bad” touch (K.PES.7)
- Understand that any inappropriate touch needs to be reported to an adult (1 and up)
- Identify the people to contact in an emergency situation (I.PHS.1 and up)
- Identify ways to maintain safety in various environments (I.PES.1, 2, 3, 4, and up)
- Know and use necessary safety practices
- (2 and up; HS)
- Recognize the misuse and inappropriate expressions of sexuality (HS)
- Learn good decision-making skills (6.SC.2 and up)

### **Strand: Self-Concepts**

#### **Grade Level Standards**

- Each person is a gift of God, deserving respect (K.SC.1 and up)
- Know when adult help is needed to resolve a problem (I.SC.3 and up )
- Identify some situations that could cause physical or emotional harm and list strategies to avoid them (K and up)
- Identify refusal skills (K and up; HS)

### **Strand: Communities**

#### **Grade Level Standards**

- Recognize positive adult-child relationships (K and up)
- Responsible use of technology & social media, including photos (6 and up)
- Morally responsible behavior toward others (HS.C.1)

### **Strand: The Body Systems**

#### **Grade Level Standards**

- **The Reproductive System** (5.BS.1; HS.BS.1)

## **OYYAM 400.13**

### **WEB 2.0/SOCIAL NETWORKING**

**The policy outlined below should serve as a course of action when considering the use of social networking tools on the Internet.**

#### **General Guidelines:**

When posting, commenting, or replying to internet sites, it is prohibited to use obscene, harassing, derogatory, defamatory or otherwise potentially scandalous comments, links, and/or images which reflect, discredit, or cause embarrassment to the Catholic Church, Diocese of Columbus, or any person or group of individuals.

Posts, comments, and/or replies must never contradict the teachings of the Catholic Church. It is prohibited to divulge, without verifiable consent of a parent or guardian, any information that would jeopardize the safety or well-being of any person or group of individuals. This includes but is not limited to pictures of any person younger than the age of 18. Also prohibited is the posting of full names, home address, email address, telephone numbers or any information that would allow someone to identify or contact a person younger than the age of 18. Verifiable consent may take the form of a written permission from the parent or guardian. Record of consent must be retained on file until the person turns 18 years of age or the consent is revoked by the parent or guardian.

It is prohibited to disclose in, post, comment, or reply to information that is understood to be held in confidence by the Diocese of Columbus.

Recognition and respect of intellectual property should be maintained at all times. Care must be taken so as not to infringe upon the exclusive rights of others, musical, literary and or artistic works. It is the responsibility of the individual to abide by all copyright laws of the United States of America.

### **Enforcement**

Failure to comply with any of the guidelines and provisions outlined here will be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination. The Department for Education reserves the right to change this policy at any time and at its discretion. The interpretation and administration of this policy will be made by diocesan officials in light of changing circumstances and events.

### **Distinguishing between Ministry and Personal Websites:**

A ministry website (MW) is a web presence created for the sole purpose of ministry for the Department for Education. This includes but is not limited to class/course, athletic, and student activity sites. Before these sites are created, permission must be obtained from the office director or administrator. If the site involves the participation of students or children, and the participation requires a username and password, the same access must be provided to child's parent or guardian. The Department for Education must be informed of the existence of any related website and be provided a password that enables the office to view the site.

A personal website (PW) is a web presence created to share personal communication with friends and associates. **Granting access to these sites by (unrelated) children is prohibited.** Accessing personal websites during work hours is prohibited. The Department for Education reserves the right to review an employee's personal website if there are reasonable grounds for believing the guidelines are being violated.

### **Web 2.0 Components**

**Second Life** - Second Life is a massive multi-player universe (MMU) set in a 3D virtual world.

(MW) It is prohibited to create a second life environment within or as a standalone ministry website without prior permission of the Department for Education.

(PW) Creation and/or participation in second life sites must follow the general guidelines listed above and be consistent with the tenants of the Catholic Church.



## **Wikis -**

- A wiki invites all users to edit any page or to create new pages within the wiki web site, using only a (general) web browser... 1
- A wiki seeks to involve the **invited user** in an ongoing process of creation and collaboration that constantly changes the Web site landscape. 1

1Ward Cunningham and co-author Bo Leuf, in their book *The Wiki Way: Quick Collaboration on the Web*

(MW) The creation of wikis should be limited to those situations which encourages dynamic participation and collaboration in the creation of a site that addresses a specific and pre-defined purpose. All wikis should be closed to the general public and serve only a pre-defined group.

(PW) Creation and/or participation in wikis must follow the general guidelines listed above and be consistent with the tenants outlined in diocesan safe environment policies.

**Photo (Video) Sharing** - Photo sharing is the publishing or transfer of a user's digital photos online, thus enabling the user to share them with others (whether publicly or privately). This functionality is provided through both websites and applications that facilitate the upload and display of images. The term can also be loosely applied to the use of online photo galleries that are set up and managed by individual users, including photoblogs and YouTube.

(MW) Photo sharing should be limited to those images that are directly associated with the purpose of the ministry, i.e. field trip photos, facility photos, etc. Photos of individuals or small groups of individuals should be uploaded or displayed only with verifiable consent.

(PW) Creation and/or participation in photo (video) sharing sites must follow the general guidelines listed above and be consistent with the tenants outlined in diocesan safe environment policies. Any images deemed inappropriate, independent of when they were made, must be removed. Sharing images on a personal site that were created for a ministry website is prohibited. All available privacy settings should be enabled.

**Blogs** - A blog is a website where entries are written in chronological order and commonly displayed in reverse chronological order.

(MW) Blogs are permitted as long as they are kept current and maintained on a regular basis. They are to be used as a means of sharing information (not opinions). The allowing of comments is permitted only if they are reviewed and approved by the moderator before they are posted. Comment moderation can be very time consuming and requires forethought by the individuals and their administrators impacted by this decision.

(PW) Creation and/or participation blog sites must follow the general guidelines listed above and be consistent with the tenets outlined in diocesan safe environment policies. If comments are permitted, the user must review the site daily so as to not allow violation of the guidelines by others. The employee is required to put the following notice in a reasonably prominent place on the site: ***“The views expressed on this website are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of my employer.”***

**Podcast** - A podcast is a digital media file, or a series of such files, that is distributed over the internet using syndication feeds for playback on portable media players, and personal computers. A podcast is a specific type of webcast which, like “radio,” can mean either the content itself or the method by which it is syndicated; the latter is also termed podcasting.

(MW) Podcasts are permitted when they are in compliance with the general guidelines established by the Diocese of Columbus.

(PW) Creation of podcasts must follow the general guidelines listed above and be consistent with the tenants outlined in diocesan safe environment policies.

**Social Networking** – refers to a website(s) in which users can add individuals as “friends” and send them messages and update their profiles to notify “friends” about themselves. Additionally, users can join networks organized by workplace, school, or college. Facebook allows anyone who declares themselves to be aged 13 or older to become a member of the website. Social networking websites allow users to create and customize their own profiles with photos, videos, and information about themselves. “Friends” can browse the profiles of other friends and write messages on their pages.

As is the case with Facebook, the profile has a "wall" where friends can post comments. Because the wall is viewable by all the user's friends, wall postings are basically a public conversation. Therefore, it is usually best not to write personal messages on your friends' walls. Instead, you can send a person a private message, which will show up in his or her private inbox, similar to an e-mail message.

Facebook provides an easy way for friends to keep in touch and for individuals to have a presence on the Web without needing to build a website. Facebook allows each user to set privacy settings.

It is incumbent upon employees of the diocese who consider using this type of web presence to learn of the limitations and security risks inherent in this type of site. Recent concerns of Facebook include but are not limited to:

1. Personal information is being shared with third parties;
2. Privacy settings revert to a less safe default mode after each redesign;
3. Facebook ads may contain malware;
4. An individual's friends unknowingly make you vulnerable;
5. Scammers are creating fake profiles.

(MW) Prior to the development of a social networking page, written approval must be obtained from the administrator or office director, whichever is appropriate. Final approval must be given from the Episcopal Moderator for Education. The Episcopal Moderator for Education must be informed of the existence of any Ministry Website and provided a password that enables her office to view the site.

So as to provide timely response and adequate management of the posts, comments, and replies there should be two adult non-related employees appointed to moderate the site.

Note: Before social networking sites are employed, the time required for maintenance must be considered since social networking sites are blocked in schools and the Department for Education. Maintenance needs to be accomplished off-site.

(PW) The Diocese expects its employees to exercise due diligence before entering into a social network. Text, images and/or video may be misconstrued when taken out of context. All of the general guidelines of this policy must be adhered to on personal websites. It should be noted that when dealing with youth as a profession, it is not uncommon for unintentional consequences to arise from what is thought to be harmless and comical actions. Employees are cautioned to evaluate their postings carefully and never consider them to be exclusive to their closed group of friends. Should material that was meant to be confidential become public by any means, the employee is still subject to the enforcement cited in this document.

Note: Twitter –falls under a different category... It is designed as a means of communicating to a group of people quickly. A “tweet” does not facilitate nor expect a response. If school personnel wishes to use twitter, they may only send messages that pertain to adults or currently registered students.

## **Catholic Diocese of Columbus Self-Insurance Office Cell Phone Policy**

Accident statistics show that the use of cell phones while driving distracts a driver's attention from traffic conditions. To promote driver safety and to help reduce the possibility of vehicle accidents in connection with cell phone use, the Catholic Diocese of Columbus has adopted the following **CELL PHONE POLICY** applicable to all employees and volunteers:

- Cellular phone calls, both incoming and outgoing, are not permitted at any time while driving a vehicle for diocesan business.
- Diocesan business includes travel between the employee's work site and external meeting locations, and between external meeting locations and the employee's work site.
- Accidents occurring while a driver is using a cellular phone may be considered preventable, and subject to disciplinary action.
- A cellular phone's voicemail feature should be activated to store incoming calls while driving.
- This policy applies to both hand-held and hands-free cell phones.
- All non-emergency calls should be made once the vehicle is safely parked.

I have read and understand the **CELL PHONE POLICY** of the Catholic Diocese of Columbus, as outlined above.

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Employee/Volunteer Signature

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Date

## **Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People (USCCB)**

The revised *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* was developed by the Ad Hoc Committee for Sexual Abuse of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). It was approved by the full body of U.S. Catholic bishops at its June 2005 General Meeting, and this second revision was approved at the June 2011 General Meeting. The revised *Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons* was developed by the Ad Hoc Committee on Sexual Abuse of the USCCB and by the Vatican-U.S. Bishops' Mixed Commission on Sex Abuse Norms. They were approved by the full body of bishops at its June 2005 General Meeting, received the subsequent *recognitio* of the Holy See on January 1, 2006, and were promulgated May 5, 2006. The revised *Statement of Episcopal Commitment* was developed by the Ad Hoc Committee on Bishops' Life and Ministry of the USCCB. It was approved by the full body of U.S. Catholic bishops at its November 2005 General Meeting and then again in 2011. This revised edition, containing all three documents, is authorized for publication by the undersigned.

—Msgr. David J. Malloy, STD  
General Secretary, USCCB

### **Preamble**

Since 2002, the Church in the United States has experienced a crisis without precedent in our times. The sexual abuse of children and young people by some deacons, priests, and bishops, and the ways in which these crimes and sins were addressed, have caused enormous pain, anger, and confusion. As bishops, we have acknowledged our mistakes and our roles in that suffering, and we apologize and take responsibility again for too often failing victims and the Catholic people in the past. From the depths of our hearts, we bishops express great sorrow and profound regret for what the Catholic people have endured.

Again, with this 2011 revision of the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, we re-affirm our deep commitment to creating a safe environment within the Church for children and youth. We have listened to the profound pain and suffering of those victimized by sexual abuse and will continue to respond to their cries. We have agonized over the sinfulness, the criminality, and the breach of trust perpetrated by some members of the clergy. We have determined as best we can the extent of the problem of this abuse of minors by clergy in our country, as well as commissioned a study of the causes and context of this problem.

We continue to have a special care for and a commitment to reaching out to the victims of sexual abuse and their families. The damage caused by sexual abuse of minors is devastating and long-lasting. We apologize to them for the grave harm that has been inflicted on them, and we offer our help for the future. The loss of trust that is often the consequence of such abuse becomes even more tragic when it leads to a loss of the faith that we have a sacred duty to foster. We make our own the words of His Holiness, Pope John Paul II: that the sexual abuse of young people is “by every standard wrong and rightly considered a crime by society; it is also an appalling sin in the eyes of God” (Address to the Cardinals of the United States and Conference

Officers, April 23, 2002).

Along with the victims and their families, the entire Catholic community in this country has suffered because of this scandal and its consequences. In the last nine years, the intense public scrutiny of the minority of the ordained who have betrayed their calling has caused the vast majority of faithful priests and deacons to experience enormous vulnerability to being misunderstood in their ministry and even to the possibility of false accusations. We share with them a firm commitment to renewing the image of the vocation to Holy Orders so that it will continue to be perceived as a life of service to others after the example of Christ our Lord.

We, who have been given the responsibility of shepherding God's people, will, with his help and in full collaboration with all the faithful, continue to work to restore the bonds of trust that unite us. Words alone cannot accomplish this goal. It will begin with the actions we take in our General Assembly and at home in our dioceses and eparchies.

We feel a particular responsibility for "the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Cor 5:18) which God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, has given us. The love of Christ impels us to ask forgiveness for our own faults but also to appeal to all—to those who have been victimized, to those who have offended, and to all who have felt the wound of this scandal—to be reconciled to God and one another.

Perhaps in a way never before experienced, we have felt the power of sin touch our entire Church family in this country; but as St. Paul boldly says, God made Christ "to be sin who did not know sin, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor 5:21). May we who have known sin experience as well, through a spirit of reconciliation, God's own righteousness. We know that after such profound hurt, healing and reconciliation are beyond human capacity alone. It is God's grace and mercy that will lead us forward, trusting Christ's promise: "for God all things are possible" (Mt 19:26).

In working toward fulfilling this responsibility, we have relied first of all on Almighty God to sustain us in faith and in the discernment of the right course to take. We have received fraternal guidance and support from the Holy See that has sustained us in this time of trial.

We have relied on the Catholic faithful of the United States. Nationally and in each diocese, the wisdom and expertise of clergy, religious, and laity have contributed immensely to confronting the effects of the crisis and have taken steps to resolve it. We are filled with gratitude for their great faith, for their generosity, and for the spiritual and moral support that we have received from them.

We acknowledge and affirm the faithful service of the vast majority of our priests and deacons and the love that their people have for them. They deservedly have our esteem and that of the Catholic people for their good work. It is regrettable that their committed ministerial witness has been overshadowed by this crisis.

In a special way, we acknowledge those victims of clergy sexual abuse and their families who have trusted us enough to share their stories and to help us appreciate more fully the

consequences of this reprehensible violation of sacred trust.

Let there now be no doubt or confusion on anyone's part: For us, your bishops, our obligation to protect children and young people and to prevent sexual abuse flows from the mission and example given to us by Jesus Christ himself, in whose name we serve.

As we work to restore trust, we are reminded how Jesus showed constant care for the vulnerable. He inaugurated his ministry with these words of the Prophet Isaiah:

*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me  
to bring glad tidings to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind,  
to let the oppressed go free,  
and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord. (Lk 4:18-19)*

In Matthew 25, the Lord, in his commission to his apostles and disciples, told them that whenever they show mercy and compassion to the least ones, they show it to him.

Jesus extended this care in a tender and urgent way to children, rebuking his disciples for keeping them away from him: "Let the children come to me" (Mt 19:14). And he uttered a grave warning that for anyone who would lead the little ones astray, it would be better for such a person "to have a great millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea" (Mt 18:6).

We hear these words of the Lord as prophetic for this moment. With a firm determination to restore the bonds of trust, we bishops recommit ourselves to a continual pastoral outreach to repair the breach with those who have suffered sexual abuse and with all the people of the Church.

In this spirit, over the last nine years, the principles and procedures of the *Charter* have been integrated into church life.

- The Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection provides the focus for a consistent, ongoing, and comprehensive approach to creating a secure environment for young people throughout the Church in the United States.
- The Secretariat also provides the means for us to be accountable for achieving the goals of the *Charter*, as demonstrated by its annual reports on the implementation of the *Charter* based on independent compliance audits.
- The National Review Board is carrying on its responsibility to assist in the assessment of diocesan compliance with the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*.
- The descriptive study of the nature and scope of sexual abuse of minors by Catholic clergy in the United States, commissioned by the National Review Board, has been completed. The resulting study, examining the historical period 1950-2002, by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice provides us with a powerful tool not only to examine our past but also to

secure our future against such misconduct.

- The U.S. bishops charged the National Review Board to oversee the completion of the *Causes and Context* study.
- Victims' assistance coordinators are in place throughout our nation to assist dioceses in responding to the pastoral needs of those who have been injured by abuse.
- Diocesan/eparchial bishops in every diocese are advised and greatly assisted by diocesan review boards as the bishops make the decisions needed to fulfill the *Charter*.
- Safe environment programs are in place to assist parents and children—and those who work with children—in preventing harm to young people. These programs continually seek to incorporate the most useful developments in the field of child protection.

Through these steps and many others, we remain committed to the safety of our children and young people.

While it seems that the scope of this disturbing problem of sexual abuse of minors by clergy has been reduced over the last decade, the harmful effects of this abuse continue to be experienced both by victims and dioceses.

Thus it is with a vivid sense of the effort which is still needed to confront the effects of this crisis fully and with the wisdom gained by the experience of the last six years that we have reviewed and revised the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. We now reaffirm that we will assist in the healing of those who have been injured, will do all in our power to protect children and young people, and will work with our clergy, religious, and laity to restore trust and harmony in our faith communities, as we pray for God's kingdom to come, here on earth, as it is in heaven.

To make effective our goals of a safe environment within the Church for children and young people and of preventing sexual abuse of minors by clergy in the future, we, the members of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, have outlined in this *Charter* a series of practical and pastoral steps, and we commit ourselves to taking them in our dioceses and eparchies.

### **To Promote Healing and Reconciliation with Victims/Survivors of Sexual Abuse of Minors**

**ARTICLE 1.** Dioceses/eparchies are to reach out to victims/survivors and their families and demonstrate a sincere commitment to their spiritual and emotional well-being. The first obligation of the Church with regard to the victims is for healing and reconciliation. Each diocese/eparchy is to continue its outreach to every person who has been the victim of sexual abuse\* as a minor by anyone in church service, whether the abuse was recent or occurred many years in the past. This outreach may include provision of counseling, spiritual assistance, support groups, and other social services agreed upon by the victim and the diocese/eparchy.



Through pastoral outreach to victims and their families, the diocesan/eparchial bishop or his representative is to offer to meet with them, to listen with patience and compassion to their experiences and concerns, and to share the “profound sense of solidarity and concern” expressed by His Holiness, Pope John Paul II, in his Address to the Cardinals of the United States and Conference Officers (April 23, 2002). Pope Benedict XVI, too, in his address to the U.S. bishops in 2008 said of the clergy sexual abuse crisis, “It is your God-given responsibility as pastors to bind up the wounds caused by every breach of trust, to foster healing, to promote reconciliation and to reach out with loving concern to those so seriously wronged.”

We bishops and eparchs commit ourselves to work as one with our brother priests and deacons to foster reconciliation among all people in our dioceses/eparchies. We especially commit ourselves to work with those individuals who were themselves abused and the communities that have suffered because of the sexual abuse of minors that occurred in their midst.

**ARTICLE 2.** Dioceses/eparchies are to have policies and procedures in place to respond promptly to any allegation where there is reason to believe that sexual abuse of a minor has occurred. Dioceses/eparchies are to have a competent person or persons to coordinate assistance for the immediate pastoral care of persons who report having been sexually abused as minors by clergy or other church personnel. The procedures for those making a complaint are to be readily available in printed form in the principal languages in which the liturgy is celebrated in the diocese/eparchy and be the subject of public announcements at least annually.

Dioceses/eparchies are also to have a review board that functions as a confidential consultative body to the bishop/eparch. The majority of its members are to be lay persons not in the employ of the diocese/eparchy (see Norm 5 in *Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons*, 2006). This board is to advise the diocesan/eparchial bishop in his assessment of allegations of sexual abuse of minors and in his determination of a cleric’s suitability for ministry. It is regularly to review diocesan/eparchial policies and procedures for dealing with sexual abuse of minors. Also, the board can review these matters both retrospectively and prospectively and give advice on all aspects of responses in connection with these cases.

**ARTICLE 3.** Dioceses/eparchies are not to enter into settlements which bind the parties to confidentiality unless the victim/survivor requests confidentiality and this request is noted in the text of the agreement.

### **To Guarantee an Effective Response to Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors**

**ARTICLE 4.** Dioceses/eparchies are to report an allegation of sexual abuse of a person who is a minor to the public authorities. Dioceses/eparchies are to comply with all applicable civil laws with respect to the reporting of allegations of sexual abuse of minors to civil authorities and cooperate in their investigation in accord with the law of the jurisdiction in question. Dioceses/eparchies are to cooperate with public authorities about reporting cases even when the

person is no longer a minor.

In every instance, dioceses/eparchies are to advise victims of their right to make a report to public authorities and support this right.

**ARTICLE 5.** We affirm the words of His Holiness, Pope John Paul II, in his Address to the Cardinals of the United States and Conference Officers: “There is no place in the priesthood or religious life for those who would harm the young.”

Sexual abuse of a minor by a cleric is a crime in the universal law of the Church (CIC, c. 1395 §2; CCEO, c. 1453 §1). Because of the seriousness of this matter, jurisdiction has been reserved to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (*Motu proprio Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela*, AAS 93, 2001). Sexual abuse of a minor is also a crime in all civil jurisdictions in the United States.

Diocesan/eparchial policy is to provide that for even a single act of sexual abuse of a minor\*—whenever it occurred—which is admitted or established after an appropriate process in accord with canon law, the offending priest or deacon is to be permanently removed from ministry and, if warranted, dismissed from the clerical state. In keeping with the stated purpose of this *Charter*, an offending priest or deacon is to be offered therapeutic professional assistance both for the purpose of prevention and also for his own healing and well-being.

The diocesan/eparchial bishop is to exercise his power of governance, within the parameters of the universal law of the Church, to ensure that any priest or deacon subject to his governance who has committed even one act of sexual abuse of a minor as described below (see note) shall not continue in ministry.

A priest or deacon who is accused of sexual abuse of a minor is to be accorded the presumption of innocence during the investigation of the allegation and all appropriate steps are to be taken to protect his reputation. He is to be encouraged to retain the assistance of civil and canonical counsel. If the allegation is deemed not substantiated, every step possible is to be taken to restore his good name, should it have been harmed.

In fulfilling this article, dioceses/eparchies are to follow the requirements of the universal law of the Church and of the *Essential Norms* approved for the United States.

**ARTICLE 6.** There are to be clear and well publicized diocesan/eparchial standards of ministerial behavior and appropriate boundaries for clergy and for any other paid personnel and volunteers of the Church in positions of trust who have regular contact with children and young people.

**ARTICLE 7.** Dioceses/eparchies are to be open and transparent in communicating with the public about sexual abuse of minors by clergy within the confines of respect for the privacy and the reputation of the individuals involved. This is especially so with regard to informing parish and other church communities directly affected by the sexual abuse of a minor.

## **To Ensure the Accountability of Our Procedures**

**ARTICLE 8.** By the authority of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the mandate of the Ad Hoc Committee on Sexual Abuse is renewed, and it is now constituted the Committee on the Protection of Children and Young People. It becomes a standing committee of the Conference. Its membership is to include representation from all the episcopal regions of the country, with new appointments staggered to maintain continuity in the effort to protect children and youth.

The Committee is to advise the USCCB on all matters related to child and youth protection and is to oversee the development of the plans, programs, and budget of the Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection. It is to provide the USCCB with comprehensive planning and recommendations concerning child and youth protection by coordinating the efforts of the Secretariat and the National Review Board.

**ARTICLE 9.** The Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection, established by the Conference of Catholic Bishops, is to staff the Committee on the Protection of Children and Young People and be a resource for dioceses/eparchies for the implementation of “safe environment” programs and for suggested training and development of diocesan personnel responsible for child and youth protection programs, taking into account the financial and other resources, as well as the population, area, and demographics of the diocese/eparchy.

The Secretariat is to produce an annual public report on the progress made in implementing and maintaining the standards in this *Charter*. The report is to be based on an annual audit process whose method, scope, and cost are to be approved by the Administrative Committee on the recommendation of the Committee on the Protection of Children and Young People. This public report is to include the names of those dioceses/eparchies which the audit shows are not in compliance with the provisions and expectations of the *Charter*. As a member of the Conference staff, the Executive Director of the Secretariat is appointed by and reports to the General Secretary. The Executive Director is to provide the Committee on the Protection of Children and Young People and the National Review Board with regular reports of the Secretariat’s activities.

**ARTICLE 10.** The whole Church, especially the laity, at both the diocesan and national levels, needs to be engaged in maintaining safe environments in the Church for children and young people.

The Committee on the Protection of Children and Young People is to be assisted by the National Review Board, a consultative body established in 2002 by the USCCB. The Board will review the annual report of the Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection on the implementation of this *Charter* in each diocese/eparchy and any recommendations that emerge from it, and offer its own assessment regarding its approval and publication to the Conference President. The Board will also advise the Conference President on future members. The Board members are appointed by the Conference President in consultation with the Administrative Committee and are accountable to him and to the USCCB Executive Committee. Before a candidate is contacted, the Conference President is to seek and obtain, in writing, the endorsement of the

candidate's diocesan bishop. The Board is to operate in accord with the statutes and bylaws of the USCCB and within procedural guidelines developed by the Board in consultation with the Committee on the Protection of Children and Young People and approved by the USCCB Administrative Committee. These guidelines set forth such matters as the Board's purpose and responsibility, officers, terms of office, and frequency of reports to the Conference President on its activities.

The Board will offer its advice as it collaborates with the Committee on the Protection of Children and Young People on matters of child and youth protection, specifically on policies and best practices. The Board and Committee on the Protection of Children and Young People will meet jointly several times a year.

The Board will review the work of the Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection and make recommendations to the Director. It will assist the Director in the development of resources for dioceses.

The Board will offer its assessment of the *Causes and Context* study to the Conference, along with any recommendations suggested by the study.

**ARTICLE 11.** The President of the Conference is to inform the Holy See of this revised *Charter* to indicate the manner in which we, the Catholic bishops, together with the entire Church in the United States, intend to continue our commitment to the protection of children and young people. The President is also to share with the Holy See the annual reports on the implementation of the *Charter*.

### **To Protect the Faithful in the Future**

**ARTICLE 12.** Dioceses/eparchies are to maintain "safe environment" programs which the diocesan/eparchial bishop deems to be in accord with Catholic moral principles. They are to be conducted cooperatively with parents, civil authorities, educators, and community organizations to provide education and training for children, youth, parents, ministers, educators, volunteers, and others about ways to make and maintain a safe environment for children and young people. Dioceses/eparchies are to make clear to clergy and all members of the community the standards of conduct for clergy and other persons in positions of trust with regard to children.

**ARTICLE 13.** Dioceses/eparchies are to evaluate the background of all incardinated and non-incardinated priests and deacons who are engaged in ecclesiastical ministry in the diocese/eparchy and of all diocesan/eparchial and parish/school or other paid personnel and volunteers whose duties include ongoing, unsupervised contact with minors. Specifically, they are to utilize the resources of law enforcement and other community agencies. In addition, they are to employ adequate screening and evaluative techniques in deciding the fitness of candidates for ordination (cf. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Program of Priestly Formation* [Fifth Edition], 2006, no. 39).

**ARTICLE 14.** Transfers of clergy who have committed an act of sexual abuse against a minor for residence, including retirement, shall be as in accord with Norm 12 of the Essential Norms. (Cf. *Proposed Guidelines on the Transfer or Assignment of Clergy and Religious*,

adopted by the USCCB, the Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM), the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR), and the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious (CMSWR) in 1993.)

**ARTICLE 15.** To ensure continuing collaboration and mutuality of effort in the protection of children and young people on the part of the bishops and religious ordinaries, two representatives of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men are to serve as consultants to the Committee on the Protection of Children and Young People. At the invitation of the Major Superiors, the Committee will designate two of its members to consult with its counterpart at CMSM. Diocesan/eparchial bishops and major superiors of clerical institutes or their delegates are to meet periodically to coordinate their roles concerning the issue of allegations made against a cleric member of a religious institute ministering in a diocese/eparchy.

**ARTICLE 16.** Given the extent of the problem of the sexual abuse of minors in our society, we are willing to cooperate with other churches and ecclesial communities, other religious bodies, institutions of learning, and other interested organizations in conducting research in this area.

**ARTICLE 17.** We commit ourselves to work individually in our dioceses/eparchies and together as a Conference, through the appropriate committees, to strengthen our programs both for initial priestly formation and for the ongoing formation of priests. With renewed urgency, we will promote programs of human formation for chastity and celibacy for both seminarians and priests based upon the criteria found in *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, the *Program of Priestly Formation*, the *Basic Plan for the Ongoing Formation of Priests*, and the results of the Apostolic Visitation. We will continue to assist priests, deacons, and seminarians in living out their vocation in faithful and integral ways.

### **Conclusion**

As we wrote in 2002, “It is within this context of the essential soundness of the priesthood and of the deep faith of our brothers and sisters in the Church that we know that we can meet and resolve this crisis for now and the future.”

We wish to reaffirm once again that the vast majority of priests and deacons serve their people faithfully and that they have the esteem and affection of their people. They also have our love and esteem and our commitment to their good names and well-being. An essential means of dealing with the crisis is prayer for healing and reconciliation, and acts of reparation for the grave offense to God and the deep wound inflicted upon his holy people. Closely connected to prayer and acts of reparation is the call to holiness of life and the care of the diocesan/eparchial bishop to ensure that he and his priests avail themselves of the proven ways of avoiding sin and growing in holiness of life.

It is with reliance on prayer and penance that we renew the pledges which we made in the original *Charter*:

**We pledge most solemnly to one another and to you, God’s people, that we will work to our**

**utmost for the protection of children and youth.**

**We pledge that we will devote to this goal the resources and personnel necessary to accomplish it.**

**We pledge that we will do our best to ordain to the priesthood and put into positions of trust only those who share this commitment to protecting children and youth.**

**We pledge that we will work toward healing and reconciliation for those sexually abused by clerics.**

Much has been done to honor these pledges. We devoutly pray that God who has begun this good work in us will bring it to fulfillment.

This *Charter* is published for the dioceses/eparchies of the United States. It is to be reviewed again after two years by the Committee on the Protection of Children and Young People with the advice of the National Review Board. The results of this review are to be presented to the full Conference of Bishops for confirmation.

#### **NOTE**

\* For purposes of this *Charter*, the offense of sexual abuse of a minor will be understood in accord with the provisions of *Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela* (SST), article 6, which reads:

§1. The more grave delicts against morals which are reserved to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith are:

1<sup>o</sup> the delict against the sixth commandment of the Decalogue committed by a cleric with a minor below the age of eighteen years; in this case, a person who habitually lacks the use of reason is to be considered equivalent to a minor.

2<sup>o</sup> the acquisition, possession, or distribution by a cleric of pornographic images of minors under the age of fourteen, for purposes of sexual gratification, by whatever means or using whatever technology;

§2. A cleric who commits the delicts mentioned above in §1 is to be punished according to the gravity of his crime, not excluding dismissal or deposition.

In view of the Circular Letter from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, dated May 3, 2011, which calls for “making allowance for the legislation of the country where the Conference is located,” Section III(g), we will apply the federal legal age for defining child pornography, which includes pornographic images of minors under the age of eighteen, for assessing a cleric’s suitability for ministry and for complying with civil reporting statutes.

If there is any doubt whether a specific act qualifies as an external, objectively grave violation, the writings of recognized moral theologians should be consulted, and the opinions of recognized experts should be appropriately obtained (*Canonical Delicts Involving Sexual Misconduct and Dismissal from the Clerical State*, 1995, p. 6). Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the diocesan bishop/eparch, with the advice of a qualified review board, to determine the gravity of the alleged act.

**Essential Norms for Diocesan/ Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons (USCCB)**

*Office of the President*

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Most Reverend William S. Skylstad, DD Bishop of Spokane

May 5, 2006

**THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS  
DECREE OF PROMULGATION**

On November 13, 2002, the members of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops approved as particular law the *Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons*. Following the grant of the required *recognitio* by the Congregation for Bishops on December 8, 2002, the *Essential Norms* were promulgated by the President of the same Conference on December 12, 2002.

Thereafter, on June 17, 2005, the members of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops approved a revised text of the *Essential Norms*. By a decree dated January 1, 2006, and signed by His Eminence, Giovanni Battista Cardinal Re, Prefect of the Congregation for Bishops, and His Excellency, the Most Reverend Francesco Monterisi, Secretary of the same Congregation, the *recognitio* originally granted to the *Essential Norms* of 2002 was extended to the revised version *donec aliter provideatur*.

As President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, I therefore decree the promulgation of the *Essential Norms* of June 17, 2005. These *Norms* shall obtain force on May 15, 2006, and so shall from that day bind as particular law all Dioceses and Eparchies of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Most Reverend William S. Skylstad Bishop of Spokane  
President, USCCB

Reverend Monsignor David J. Malloy General Secretary

**Preamble**

On June 14, 2002, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops approved a *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. The charter addresses the Church's commitment to deal appropriately and effectively with cases of sexual abuse of minors by priests, deacons, and other church personnel (i.e., employees and volunteers). The bishops of the United States have promised to reach out to those who have been sexually abused as minors by anyone serving the Church in ministry, employment, or a volunteer position, whether the sexual abuse was recent or occurred many years ago. They stated that they would be as open as possible with the people in parishes and communities about instances of sexual abuse of minors, with respect always for the privacy and the reputation of the individuals involved. They have

committed themselves to the pastoral and spiritual care and emotional well-being of those who have been sexually abused and of their families.

In addition, the bishops will work with parents, civil authorities, educators, and various organizations in the community to make and maintain the safest environment for minors. In the same way, the bishops have pledged to evaluate the background of seminary applicants as well as all church personnel who have responsibility for the care and supervision of children and young people.

Therefore, to ensure that each diocese/eparchy in the United States of America will have procedures in place to respond promptly to all allegations of sexual abuse of minors, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops decrees these norms for diocesan/eparchial policies dealing with allegations of sexual abuse of minors by diocesan and religious priests or deacons.<sup>1</sup> These norms are complementary to the universal law of the Church and are to be interpreted in accordance with that law. The Church has traditionally considered the sexual abuse of minors a grave delict and punishes the offender with penalties, not excluding dismissal from the clerical state if the case so warrants.

For purposes of these Norms, sexual abuse shall include any offense by a cleric against the Sixth Commandment of the Decalogue with a minor as understood in CIC, canon 1395 §2, and CCEO, canon 1453 §1 (*Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela*, article 6 §1).<sup>2</sup>

### **Norms**

1. These Essential Norms have been granted recognition by the Holy See. Having been legitimately promulgated in accordance with the practice of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops on May 5, 2006, they constitute particular law for all the dioceses/eparchies of the United States of America.<sup>3</sup>
2. Each diocese/eparchy will have a written policy on the sexual abuse of minors by priests and deacons, as well as by other church personnel. This policy is to comply fully with, and is to specify in more detail, the steps to be taken in implementing the requirements of canon law, particularly CIC, canons 1717-1719, and CCEO, canons 1468-1470. A copy of this policy will be filed with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops within three months of the effective date of these norms. Copies of any eventual revisions of the written diocesan/eparchial policy are also to be filed with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops within three months of such modifications.
3. Each diocese/eparchy will designate a competent person to coordinate assistance for the immediate pastoral care of persons who claim to have been sexually abused when they were minors by priests or deacons.
4. To assist diocesan/eparchial bishops, each diocese/eparchy will also have a review board which will function as a confidential consultative body to the bishop/eparch in discharging his responsibilities. The functions of this board may include



- a. advising the diocesan bishop/eparch in his assessment of allegations of sexual abuse of minors and in his determination of suitability for ministry;
  - b. reviewing diocesan/eparchial policies for dealing with sexual abuse of minors; and
  - c. offering advice on all aspects of these cases, whether retrospectively or prospectively.
5. The review board, established by the diocesan/eparchial bishop, will be composed of at least five persons of outstanding integrity and good judgment in full communion with the Church. The majority of the review board members will be lay persons who are not in the employ of the diocese/eparchy; but at least one member should be a priest who is an experienced and respected pastor of the diocese/eparchy in question, and at least one member should have particular expertise in the treatment of the sexual abuse of minors. The members will be appointed for a term of five years, which can be renewed. It is desirable that the Promoter of Justice participate in the meetings of the review board.
  6. When an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor by a priest or deacon is received, a preliminary investigation in accordance with canon law will be initiated and conducted promptly and objectively (CIC, c. 1717; CCEO, c. 1468). During the investigation the accused enjoys the presumption of innocence, and all appropriate steps shall be taken to protect his reputation. The accused will be encouraged to retain the assistance of civil and canonical counsel and will be promptly notified of the results of the investigation. When there is sufficient evidence that sexual abuse of a minor has occurred, the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith shall be notified. The bishop/eparch shall then apply the precautionary measures mentioned in CIC, canon 1722, or CCEO, canon 1473—i.e., withdraw the accused from exercising the sacred ministry or any ecclesiastical office or function, impose or prohibit residence in a given place or territory, and prohibit public participation in the Most Holy Eucharist pending the outcome of the process.<sup>4</sup>
  7. The alleged offender may be requested to seek, and may be urged voluntarily to comply with, an appropriate medical and psychological evaluation at a facility mutually acceptable to the diocese/eparchy and to the accused.
  8. When even a single act of sexual abuse by a priest or deacon is admitted or is established after an appropriate process in accord with canon law, the offending priest or deacon will be removed permanently from ecclesiastical ministry, not excluding dismissal from the clerical state, if the case so warrants (SST, Art. 6; CIC, c. 1395 §2; CCEO, c. 1453 §1).<sup>5</sup>
    - a. In every case involving canonical penalties, the processes provided for in canon law must be observed, and the various provisions of canon law must be considered (cf. *Canonical Delicts Involving Sexual Misconduct and Dismissal from the Clerical State*, 1995; Letter from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, May 18, 2001). Unless the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, having been notified, calls the case to itself because of special circumstances, it will direct the diocesan bishop/eparch to proceed (Article 13, “Procedural

Norms” for *Motu proprio Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela*, AAS, 93, 2001, p. 787). If the case would otherwise be barred by prescription, because sexual abuse of a minor is a grave offense, the bishop/eparch may apply to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith for a derogation from the prescription, while indicating relevant grave reasons. For the sake of canonical due process, the accused is to be encouraged to retain the assistance of civil and canonical counsel. When necessary, the diocese/eparchy will supply canonical counsel to a priest. The provisions of CIC, canon 1722, or CCEO, canon 1473, shall be implemented during the pendency of the penal process.

- b. If the penalty of dismissal from the clerical state has not been applied (e.g., for reasons of advanced age or infirmity), the offender ought to lead a life of prayer and penance. He will not be permitted to celebrate Mass publicly or to administer the sacraments. He is to be instructed not to wear clerical garb, or to present himself publicly as a priest.
9. At all times, the diocesan bishop/eparch has the executive power of governance, within the parameters of the universal law of the Church, through an administrative act, to remove an offending cleric from office, to remove or restrict his faculties, and to limit his exercise of priestly ministry.<sup>6</sup> Because sexual abuse of a minor by a cleric is a crime in the universal law of the Church (CIC, c. 1395 §2; CCEO, c. 1453 §1) and is a crime in all civil jurisdictions in the United States, for the sake of the common good and observing the provisions of canon law, the diocesan bishop/eparch shall exercise this power of governance to ensure that any priest or deacon who has committed even one act of sexual abuse of a minor as described above shall not continue in active ministry.<sup>7</sup>
  10. The priest or deacon may at any time request a dispensation from the obligations of the clerical state. In exceptional cases, the bishop/eparch may request of the Holy Father the dismissal of the priest or deacon from the clerical state *ex officio*, even without the consent of the priest or deacon.
  11. The diocese/eparchy will comply with all applicable civil laws with respect to the reporting of allegations of sexual abuse of minors to civil authorities and will cooperate in their investigation. In every instance, the diocese/eparchy will advise and support a person’s right to make a report to public authorities.<sup>8</sup>
  12. No priest or deacon who has committed an act of sexual abuse of a minor may be transferred for a ministerial assignment in another diocese/eparchy. Every bishop/eparch who receives a priest or deacon from outside his jurisdiction will obtain the necessary information regarding any past act of sexual abuse of a minor by the priest or deacon in question. Before such a diocesan/eparchial priest or deacon can be transferred for residence to another diocese/eparchy, his diocesan/eparchial bishop shall forward, in a confidential manner, to the bishop of the proposed place of residence any and all information concerning any act of sexual abuse of a minor and any other information indicating that he has been or may be a

danger to children or young people.

In the case of the assignment for residence of such a clerical member of an institute or a society into a local community within a diocese/eparchy, the major superior shall inform the diocesan/eparchial bishop and share with him in a manner respecting the limitations of confidentiality found in canon and civil law all information concerning any act of sexual abuse of a minor and any other information indicating that he has been or may be a danger to children or young people so that the bishop/eparch can make an informed judgment that suitable safeguards are in place for the protection of children and young people. This will be done with due recognition of the legitimate authority of the bishop/eparch; of the provisions of CIC, canon 678 (CCEO, canons 415 §1 and 554 §2), and of CIC, canon 679; and of the autonomy of the religious life (CIC, c. 586).

13. Care will always be taken to protect the rights of all parties involved, particularly those of the person claiming to have been sexually abused and of the person against whom the charge has been made. When an accusation has been shown to be unfounded, every step possible will be taken to restore the good name of the person falsely accused.

## Notes

1 These Norms constitute particular law for the dioceses, eparchies, clerical religious institutes, and societies of apostolic life of the United States with respect to all priests and deacons in the ecclesiastical ministry of the Church in the United States. When a major superior of a clerical religious institute or society of apostolic life applies and interprets them for the internal life and governance of the institute or society, he has the obligation to do so according to the universal law of the Church and the proper law of the institute or society.

2 If there is any doubt whether a specific act qualifies as an external, objectively grave violation, the writings of recognized moral theologians should be consulted, and the opinions of recognized experts should be appropriately obtained (*Canonical Delicts*, p. 6). Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the diocesan bishop/eparch, with the advice of a qualified review board, to determine the gravity of the alleged act.

3 Due regard must be given to the proper legislative authority of each Eastern Catholic Church.

4 Article 19 *Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela states*, “With due regard for the right of the Ordinary to impose from the outset of the preliminary investigation those measures which are established in can. 1722 of the Code of Canon Law, or in can. 1473 of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches, the respective presiding judge may, at the request of the Promoter of Justice, exercise the same power under the same conditions determined in the canons themselves.”

5 For purposes of these Norms, the offense of sexual abuse of a minor will be understood in accord with the provisions of *Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela* (SST), article 6, which reads: §1. The more grave delicts against morals which are reserved to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith are:

1<sup>o</sup> the delict against the sixth commandment of the Decalogue committed by a cleric with a minor below the age of eighteen years; in this case, a person who habitually lacks the use of reason is to be considered equivalent to a minor.

2<sup>o</sup> the acquisition, possession, or distribution by a cleric of pornographic images of minors under the age of fourteen, for purposes of sexual gratification, by whatever means or using whatever technology;

§2. A cleric who commits the delicts mentioned above in §1 is to be punished according to the gravity of his crime, not excluding dismissal or deposition.

If there is any doubt whether a specific act qualifies as an external, objectively grave violation, the writings of recognized moral theologians should be consulted, and the opinions of recognized experts should be appropriately obtained (*Canonical Delicts Involving Sexual Misconduct and Dismissal from the Clerical State*, 1995, p. 6). Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the diocesan bishop/eparch, with the advice of a qualified review board, to determine the gravity of the alleged act. Removal from ministry is required whether or not the cleric is diagnosed by qualified experts as a pedophile or as suffering from a related sexual disorder that requires professional treatment. With regard to the use of the phrase “ecclesiastical ministry,” by clerical members of institutes of consecrated life and societies of apostolic life, the provisions of canons 678 and 738 also apply, with due regard for canons 586 and 732.

6 Cf. CIC, cc. 35-58, 149, 157, 187-189, 192-195, 277 §3, 381 §1, 383, 391, 1348, and 1740-1747. Cf. also

CCEO, cc. 1510 §1 and 2, 1<sup>o</sup>-2<sup>o</sup>, 1511, 1512 §§1-2, 1513 §§2-3 and 5, 1514-1516, 1517 §1, 1518, 1519 §2,

1520 §§1-3, 1521, 1522 §1, 1523-1526, 940, 946, 967-971, 974-977, 374, 178, 192 §§1-3, 193 §2, 191, and

1389-1396.

7 The diocesan bishop/eparch may exercise his executive power of governance to take one or more of the following administrative actions (CIC, cc. 381, 129ff.; CCEO, cc. 178, 979ff.):

a. He may request that the accused freely resign from any currently held ecclesiastical office (CIC, cc. 187-189; CCEO, cc. 967-971).

b. Should the accused decline to resign and should the diocesan bishop/eparch judge the accused to be truly not suitable (CIC, c. 149 §1; CCEO, c. 940) at this time for holding an office previously freely conferred (CIC, c. 157), then he may remove that person from office observing the required canonical procedures (CIC, cc. 192-195, 1740-1747; CCEO, cc. 974-977, 1389-1396).

c. For a cleric who holds no office in the diocese/eparchy, any previously delegated faculties may be administratively removed (CIC, cc. 391 §1 and 142 §1; CCEO, cc. 191 §1 and 992 §1), while any *de iure* faculties may be removed or restricted by the competent authority as provided in law (e.g., CIC, c. 764; CCEO, c. 610 §§2-3).

d. The diocesan bishop/eparch may also determine that circumstances surrounding a particular case constitute the just and reasonable cause for a priest to celebrate the Eucharist with no member of the faithful present (CIC, c. 906). The bishop may forbid the priest to celebrate the Eucharist publicly and to administer the sacraments, for the good of the Church and for his own good.

e. Depending on the gravity of the case, the diocesan bishop/eparch may also dispense (CIC, cc. 85-88; CCEO, cc. 1536 §1–1538) the cleric from the obligation of wearing clerical attire (CIC, c. 284; CCEO,

c. 387) and may urge that he not do so, for the good of the Church and for his own good.

These administrative actions shall be taken in writing and by means of decrees (CIC, cc. 47-58; CCEO, cc. 1510 §2, 1°-2°, 1511, 1513 §§2-3 and 5, 1514, 1517 §1, 1518, 1519 §2, 1520) so that the cleric affected is afforded the opportunity of recourse against them in accord with canon law (CIC, cc. 1734ff.; CCEO, cc. 999ff.).

8 The necessary observance of the canonical norms internal to the Church is not intended in any way to hinder the course of any civil action that may be operative. At the same time, the Church reaffirms her right to enact legislation binding on all her members concerning the ecclesiastical dimensions of the delict of sexual abuse of minors.

### A Statement of Episcopal Commitment

We bishops pledge again to respond to the demands of the *Charter* in a way that manifests our accountability to God, to God's people, and to one another. Individually and together, we acknowledge mistakes in the past when some bishops transferred, from one assignment to another, priests who abused minors. We recognize our roles in the suffering this has caused, and we continue to ask forgiveness for it.

Without at all diminishing the importance of broader accountability, this statement focuses on the accountability which flows from our episcopal communion and fraternal solidarity, a moral responsibility we have with and for each other.

While bishops are ordained primarily for their diocese or eparchy, we are called as well to protect the unity and to promote the common discipline of the whole Church (CIC, c. 392; CCEO, c. 201). Participating in the college of bishops, each bishop is responsible to act in a manner that reflects both effective and affective collegiality.

Respecting the legitimate rights of bishops who are directly accountable to the Holy See, in a spirit of collegiality and fraternity we renew our commitment to the following:

1. Within each province, we will assist each other to interpret correctly and implement the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, always respecting Church law and striving to reflect the Gospel.
2. We will apply the requirements of the *Charter* also to ourselves, respecting always Church law as it applies to bishops. Therefore, if a bishop is accused of the sexual abuse of a minor, the accused bishop is obliged to inform the Apostolic Nuncio. If another bishop becomes aware of the sexual abuse of a minor by another bishop or of an allegation of the sexual abuse of a minor by a bishop, he too is obliged to inform the Apostolic Nuncio and comply with applicable civil laws.
3. In cases of financial demands for settlements involving allegations of any sexual misconduct by a bishop, he, or any of us who become aware of it, is obliged to inform the Apostolic Nuncio.
4. Within each of our provinces, as an expression of collegiality, including fraternal support,

fraternal challenge and fraternal correction, we will engage in ongoing mutual reflection upon our commitment to holiness of life and upon the exercise of our episcopal ministry.

In making this statement, we firmly uphold the dignity of every human being and renew our commitment to live and promote the chastity required of all followers of Christ and especially of deacons, priests and bishops.

This Statement of Episcopal Commitment will be reviewed by the Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations upon the next review of the *Charter*.

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Issued by USCCB, June 16, 2011

\_\_\_\_\_  
FIRST NAME LAST NAME



\_\_\_\_\_  
DRIVERS'S LICENSE # STATE

### VOLUNTEER DRIVER INFORMATION

Please initial each item below to verify information:

\_\_\_\_\_ I am at least 25 years of age

\_\_\_\_\_ Security background check

\_\_\_\_\_ I have completed the "Protecting God's Children" training

\_\_\_\_\_ I have a valid registration for the vehicle

\_\_\_\_\_ My vehicle is insured for minimum bodily injury liability coverage limits of at least \$100,000 per person/\$300,000 per occurrence. I understand that I am required to have the above insurance coverage in effect on any vehicle used to transport students.

\_\_\_\_\_ My vehicle is insured for minimum property damage of at least \$100,000 or a combined single limit of \$300,000. I understand that I am required to have the above insurance coverage in effect on any vehicle used to transport students.

I have car insurance with \_\_\_\_\_ company.

As a volunteer driver I will:

- be responsible to see that each student being transported in my vehicle is wearing a seatbelt
- follow the preferred route (s) to be traveled, if any
- be responsible for seeing that I have been given the emergency medical form corresponding to each student assigned to my vehicle
- observe the following cell phone policy: Cellular phone calls, both incoming and outgoing, are not permitted at any time while driving a vehicle for diocesan business. A cellular phone's voicemail feature should be activated to store incoming calls while driving. This policy applies to both hand-held and hands-free phones.

I certify that the information given above is true. I realize that it is my responsibility to notify the parish if there is a change in any of the above information.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

Revised 05/06

**DIOCESE OF COLUMBUS ADULT PARTICIPATION  
REGISTRATION/PERMISSION/RELEASE AND INDEMNIFICATION AGREEMENT**

PARISH NAME \_\_\_\_\_ PARISH CITY \_\_\_\_\_

*Please print clearly; return with appropriate payment to your adult leader. All incomplete forms will be returned.*

**1. REGISTRATION (Each Adult Participant Must Complete a Separate Form)**

A. Name of Adult Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

DOB: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ Male:  Female:  Clergy/Religious

Group Leader/Youth Minister  HS Campus Minister  Medical Personnel

Name of Group Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

B. Name of Activity \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of Activity \_\_\_\_\_

**2. SPECIFIC MEDICAL INFORMATION AND MEDICATION**

**A. Specific Medical Information.**

*The Parish will take reasonable care to see that the following information will be held in confidence.*

Chronic Conditions (e.g. Epilepsy; Diabetes) \_\_\_\_\_

Allergic Reactions (e.g. Food, medications, plants, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Dietary Restrictions \_\_\_\_\_

Immunizations – Date of last tetanus/diphtheria immunization \_\_\_\_\_

Any physical limitations? \_\_\_\_\_

Has the Participant recently been exposed to contagious disease or conditions, such as mumps, measles, chicken pox, etc.? If so, list date and disease or condition \_\_\_\_\_

Any special medical conditions of the Participant \_\_\_\_\_

B. Medication: The Participant is responsible for providing and taking all medication, prescription or non-prescription, required by the Participant.

C. Emergency Contact and Information.



Emergency Contact \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
Medical Insurance \_\_\_\_\_ Policy Number \_\_\_\_\_  
Member's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
Family Doctor \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

*In the event of an emergency, the undersigned hereby give(s) permission to be transported to a hospital.*

### 3. RELEASE AND INDEMNIFICATION

- A. Release. The undersigned on behalf of the undersigned and the heirs, successors and assigns of the undersigned hereby releases, holds harmless from any liability, and discharges from all direct or derivative claims, actions, causes of actions, medical expenses, costs, legal expenses, other expenses and all other damages at law or in equity, known or unknown, direct or indirect, choate or inchoate against the Diocese of Columbus, the Parish and all current and former employees, agents, clergy, officers and volunteers of the Diocese of Columbus or the Parish, arising from the Participant's participation in the Activity named in Section I.B., above.
- B. Indemnification. The undersigned shall indemnify and hold harmless the Diocese of Columbus, the Parish, and all current and former employees, agents, clergy, officers and volunteers of the Diocese of Columbus or the Parish from any claim, liability, suit, judgment, loss, damage, expense, fee or cost (including court costs and attorney fees) arising directly or indirectly from the participation of the undersigned in the Activity named in Section I.B., above, unless arising from the negligence of an indemnified party.

### 4. CODE OF BEHAVIOR

- A. Adults. Adults shall at all times conduct themselves in a lawful manner appropriate to the Activity. Adults shall act with respect for all other participants in the Activity. Adults shall act in accordance with the principles of the Roman Catholic Church.
- B. Student Activities. Adult participants shall at all times be present and shall chaperone students assigned by group leader. Adult participants will supervise and monitor the movement of students throughout the activity. Adult participants will insure that no students enter areas specifically prohibited. Adult participants will insure that no students enter any rooms or areas that are not appropriately chaperoned by two adults. Adult participants will use safe environment practices such as not meeting with students in secluded areas; making sure enough adults are chaperoning all activities; observing other adults who are interacting with youth; and notifying OYYAM staff of any inappropriate activities throughout the duration of the activity. Adult participants will respect that the sessions are designed for the benefit of students and will refrain from excessive questions or participation in the sessions. The possession or use of alcohol, tobacco, drugs, or weapons of any kind by students or adult participants is not permitted. Failure to abide by this Code of Behavior may result in a request for the adult to leave the premises.

### 5. SAFE ENVIRONMENT COMPLIANCE

Date of Criminal Background Investigation Report: /\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/

Protecting God's Children: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date Location

- I HAVE READ, AND UNDERSTAND AND AGREE TO ALL CONTAINED IN THIS AGREEMENT.
- I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE ABOVE CODE OF BEHAVIOR AND COMMIT TO UPHOLD THIS CODE OF BEHAVIOR.
- I AFFIRM THAT THE SAFE ENVIRONMENT COMPLIANCE INFORMATION I HAVE PROVIDED IS COMPLETE AND TRUTHFUL.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **BEST PRACTICES FOR SCREENING ADULT VOLUNTEERS**

### **1. Develop Policies and Procedures**

Comprehensive policies help ensure that potential volunteers are treated fairly and that procedures are used consistently. Policies also help to provide continuity to a program.

Parish policies might include information about how volunteers will be screened – whether by application, interview, or a combination – what kind and the minimum number of references that will be required. Additionally, evaluation, dismissal, separation, and grievance processes could be outlined.

### **2. Create Volunteer Position Descriptions**

Detailed position descriptions allow potential volunteers to determine whether an opportunity fits their interests, skills, and schedule. Additionally, volunteer administrators may use the position description to screen candidates based upon the basic qualifications needed for placement, including a clean police record.

### **3. Ask Volunteers to Complete an Application**

A thorough written application can be a valuable screening tool. An application can help determine a volunteer's attitudes toward children, child abuse, and volunteering in general. An application may ask for personal information including name, address, phone, e-mail, social security number; emergency contact information; recent employment/volunteer information; areas of interest and availability; driver's license/insurance information when appropriate; medical conditions or special needs; references; and past felonies and/or misdemeanors. Ask potential volunteers for their signature to affirm that they have given truthful information.

### **4. Conduct Interviews**

Conducting interviews can be especially helpful when placing individuals interested in volunteer positions. Effective interviewing techniques include open-ended questions, good listening skills, and a clear understanding of the questions interviewers are permitted to ask under existing federal and state regulations.

### **5. Ask for References and/or Endorsements**

References help organizations confirm personal and professional information provided by the potential volunteer and offer an objective opinion of that person's qualifications. For activities that call for regular unsupervised access, organizations might require volunteers to give at least two non-related references. For decentralized activities, seeking endorsement/approval from a person who is well acquainted with the volunteer will provide additional information. It's important to document all contacts.

**Diocese of Columbus**  
Diocesan Recreation Association  
197 E. Gay Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

**Parent's Consent for Release of Personally Identifiable Information**

The undersigned parents of \_\_\_\_\_, a member of  
(Child's name)

\_\_\_\_\_ hereby consent to the release of the  
(Parish name)  
following personally identifiable information.

- **Photos without names of the athletes will be released.**
- **Photos will be used to help promote the activities and acknowledge the achievements of the participants in the Diocesan Recreation Association.**
- **Information will primarily be released through the Catholic Times and on the Diocesan Recreation Association website at [www.cdeducation.org/rec](http://www.cdeducation.org/rec)**

The undersigned consent to the transfer of the above information to a third or subsequent party.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Parent's name) (Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Parent's name) (Date)

A copy of the release is requested: Please check one.

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

## **BEST PRACTICES FOR MONITORING YOUTH MINISTRY FACILITIES**

Child molesters look for ways to spend time alone with children. If they know someone is watching, they have more trouble finding opportunities to abuse without getting caught. The following steps can help create a safer environment for our children, youth, and adults.

- Identify secluded areas, lock empty rooms.
- Develop policies regarding use of secluded areas.
- Do not permit youth to enter staff-only areas.
- Only meet with youth where other adults can pass by.
- Supervisors should look in on activities.
- Make sure enough adult volunteers are present for all programs.
- Encourage parents to visit and participate in programs and activities.
- Do not start any new programs without approval from the pastor.

## **BEST PRACTICES FOR SCREENING AND MONITORING ADOLESCENT VOLUNTEERS**

### **Introduction**

In many parishes, adolescents provide a substantial amount of service in programs for younger children. Service projects that provide babysitting for parents during the holidays or assistance with religious education classes or nurseries during Mass are just a few of the ways that adolescents serve parishes and learn about the responsibility of parish life. Often these projects are part of preparation for Confirmation.

However, it is important not to assume automatically that adolescents are “safe” just because of their participation in ministry. Research indicates that adolescents are a high risk group for sexual abuse of children. In fact, studies in the United States indicate that juveniles are responsible for 40 percent of the sexual assaults on children under the age of 6 and 39 percent of the attacks on children ages 11-16.[i] One study in the U.S. shows that 13 to 14 year olds are responsible for more than three times the number of sexual molestation cases of children under the age 12 than any other age group over 16.[ii]

Over the past several years, through *Protecting God's Children for Adults* sessions and diocesan policies and audits, there is a heightened awareness about the need to screen adults before allowing them access to minors. The need to screen and monitor those with access to children is not just confined to adults. Attention must be paid to the adolescents who are caring for and ministering to minors.

### **Screening**

Many parishes are looking for guidance in their efforts to conduct thorough screening and meet the needs of ministry to all the children in the community. There is no easy way to screen adolescents. In fact, some traditional screening tools will not help when the applicant is an adolescent. We cannot conduct civilian criminal background checks on juveniles, for example. Even those with convictions are protected from discovery through background checks and the record is wiped clean when the young person turns 18.

This means that it is essential that policies be established and enforced that govern the interactions between adolescents and the young people they serve. Traditional screening tools including applications, references (perhaps including letters of references from non-related adults who are familiar with the young person's character), and personal interviews are crucial parts to any effective screening process.

Parish policies and procedures must also take into account the limited ability to screen adolescent applicants. For example, require that a policy-compliant adult supervise all interactions, programs, and events involving adolescents and younger children. In addition, maintain a policy similar to the Boy Scouts' “two-deep leadership.” Within a parish, this means that there be no less than two responsible adult leaders present with young people, and both of them must be compliant with all diocesan policies.

Establishing policies and going through the traditional application and interview processes can help parishes to establish a responsible process for screening adolescents who are involved in children's ministries.

## **Training**

Because of the sensitive nature of the material, adolescents are not permitted to attend Protecting God's Children for Adults sessions. Parish leaders should work with adolescent volunteers to make them aware of parish and diocesan policies.

The *Protecting God's Children Quick Reference Guide* brochure should be shared with adolescent volunteers to make them aware of our plan to protect children and youth. When sharing information about child sexual abuse with adolescent volunteers, particular attention to the following will also be beneficial:

- The harm sexual abuse causes.
- The danger of dwelling on unhealthy fantasies.
- The importance of reporting suspected abuse, including abuse committed by a peer.

## **Warning Signs**

Some of the behavioral warning signs of risky adolescents are the same as those of risky adults. Additionally, the following signs are unique to the adolescent offender.

Risky adolescents may:

- Explore his or her own natural sexual curiosity with younger children or those of differing size, status, ability, or power. This means an adolescent may be more overtly sexual with young children.
- Focus on being with younger children rather than with their own peers. This adolescent spends an unusual amount of time with younger children when he or she could be with peers.
- Share "secret" places or hideaways with younger children or create and play "special" games with them that involve too much touching and demands for silence.
- Insist on physical contact with a child, even when the child resists the attention.

[i] Oliver, B. (2007) Child Abuse & Neglect, "Three steps to reducing child molestation by adolescents", Vol 31, 683.

[ii] Ibid.

Based on *Screening and Monitoring Adolescent Volunteers*, by: Sharon Doty, J.D., M.H.R. and published by The National Catholic Risk Retention Group, 2008.





## **BEST PRACTICES FOR MONITORING YOUTH MINISTRY FACILITIES**

Child molesters look for ways to spend time alone with children. If they know someone is watching, they have more trouble finding opportunities to abuse without getting caught. The following steps can help create a safer environment for our children, youth, and adults.

- Identify secluded areas, lock empty rooms.
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- Only meet with youth where other adults can pass by.
- Supervisors should look in on activities.
- Make sure enough adult volunteers are present for all programs.
- Encourage parents to visit and participate in programs and activities.
- Do not start any new programs without approval from the pastor.

## Protecting God's Children™ – Frequently Asked Questions

***Q: “Who has to take Protecting God's Children™ (PGC)?”***

- All paid diocesan, parish and school staff and any clergy temporarily assigned to the Diocese of Columbus *regardless of their level of contact with children and youth*
- All volunteers in a program or ministry for children and youth *regardless of their level of contact with children and youth* (examples: Catholic school, PSR program, etc.)
- Volunteers for other parish programs or ministries who have been delegated care, custody, or control of children and youth (example: choir director, sacristan)

***Q: “Is there a cost to take the PGC class?”***

There is no charge to attend. All workbook materials and handouts are provided by the host parish or school. Participants should bring a pen.

***Q: “I took the Boy Scouts of America program; do I still have to take PGC?”***

Yes.

***Q: “Can I get CEU credit for my job?”***

The Diocese is not equipped to provide continuing education credits for this class.

***Q: “I'm not Catholic. Do I still have to take Protecting God's Children to coach?”***

Yes.

***Q: “Do I have to take the class just to be a driver for a high school field trip?”***

Yes. Duration of service does not mitigate compliance.

***Q: “I am a victim of sexual abuse and I would find it too disturbing to attend the class. Can I still volunteer?”***

The Diocese will work individually with victims. Call the diocesan Safe Environment Consultant at 614-241-2565 for confidential arrangements.

***Q: “How do I register for the Protecting God's Children class?”***

You may register on-line at [www.virtus.org](http://www.virtus.org) and click on “Registration.” Choose “Begin the Registration Process”, select “Diocese of Columbus” as your location, and then follow the prompts. If you do not have Internet access, you may contact your parish or school for help or the diocesan Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry.

***Q: “How do I find out when and where the classes are being held?”***

The current schedule is posted online at [www.virtus.org](http://www.virtus.org), click on “Registration” and choose “View a list of sessions.” Be sure to select “Diocese of Columbus.”

***Q: “Is childcare available at the class?”***

No, and children are not permitted to attend. Participants who bring children will be asked to leave and reschedule for another session.

***Q: “Where can I get more information?”***

Visit the diocesan Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry website at <http://www.cdeducation.org/oym/> and click on “Safe Environment” or contact the Diocese at 614-241-2565.

Revised 03/18/08

## Fingerprinting & Background Checking – Frequently Asked Questions

***Q: “Why do I have to get a background check to volunteer?”***

The purpose of conducting criminal background investigations is to prevent those with specific criminal backgrounds from gaining access to our children. (Examples: assault, domestic violence, corruption of minor, sexual crimes, etc.)

***Q: “What if my background check reflects an offense from my past?”***

While there are serious offenses that would absolutely prevent someone from volunteering with children, not everyone with an offense is precluded from volunteering. These are handled confidentially on a case-by-case basis.

***Q: “Where do I get fingerprinted?”***

Electronic WebCheck locations are listed by county on the Attorney General’s website at: <http://www.webcheck.ag.state.oh.us/webcheckcommunity.htm>.

***Q: “What information should I take when getting fingerprinted?”***

- A valid Ohio driver’s license or Ohio photo ID
- Address of Safe Environment Program (Diocese of Columbus 197 E. Gay St Columbus OH 43215) so that the report can be mailed to the proper location
- Reason:
  - Teachers and School Employees: “Responsible for care, custody, control of children ORC 3319.39”
  - Parish Employees: “Out of Home Daycare Providers ORC 2151.86”
  - Parish and School Volunteers: “Out of Home Daycare Providers ORC 2151.86”
- Payment

***Q: “Is there a cost for the fingerprinting/background checks?”***

Yes. It’s best to ask ahead of time with the fingerprinting agency regarding specific costs.

***Q: “Which background check do I need? BCI or FBI?”***

**BCI Check:** If applicant has lived in Ohio for at least the past 5 consecutive years

**FBI Check:** If applicant has lived outside of Ohio at any time during the past 5 consecutive years.

***Q: “Do I have to be fingerprinted before I attend Protecting God’s Children™?”***

The two requirements are separate, and can be done in either order.

***Q: “Can I get fingerprinted at the Protecting God’s Children™ class?”***

Possibly. Fingerprinting services may be provided in conjunction with fingerprinting process is separate from PGC classes. Check the session information page.

***Q: “I had to be fingerprinted for work; can this report be used?”***

For the safety of our children and by law, we require that a new background check be conducted before staff/volunteers begin working with children on behalf of the church.

The exception is if the background check is less than one year old; in that case, you can request that the BCI&I send another original report to the Safe Environment Program.

Revised 03/18/08

## Post-registration Instructions for Protecting God's Children™ Training Sessions

All participants must be registered in the Virtus database to be recognized as being in compliance by the Diocese.

1. Go to **www.virtus.org**
2. On the left-hand side of the page, click the yellow link labeled "**Registration**" just below the login button. Do NOT try to log in.
3. Choose "Begin the Registration Process"
4. Choose "Columbus,OH (Diocese)" as your organization, click Select.
5. Create a user ID and a password you can easily remember. If the User ID you create is already in use, the system will make you choose a different one. Click Continue.
6. Provide the information requested. Several fields are required, such as name, address, phone number and email address. Click Continue to proceed.
7. Since many people volunteer for several parishes/schools, select the primary location where you work, volunteer or worship on this page. (Do not select the location of your training site in this section.) Click Continue.
8. Your current list of locations is now displayed. If you need to add an additional location, choose YES. Otherwise, choose NO.
9. Select all the role(s) that you serve within the church. Please enter a title in the box (e.g., Parent Volunteer, Coach, DRE, Catechist, etc.) Click Continue to proceed.
10. A second page of roles will be displayed, please select all that apply. Click continue.
11. Answer three YES/NO questions and then click Continue.
12. When asked if you have already attended a Protecting God's Children Session, click **YES**.
13. You will be presented with a list of past sessions. Select the training site and date where you attended from the drop down list. Select Complete Registration. You will see a message "*Your account request will be reviewed by your coordinator.*"
14. E-mail Regina Quinn, Safe Environment Manager, with your name, date and location of your session (rquinn@columbuscatholic.org) so that she knows to check for and approve your registration in Virtus.

Revised 8/15/16

## Links to Helpful Sites

- **Protecting God's Children:** [www.virtusonline.org/virtus/protecting\\_children.cfm](http://www.virtusonline.org/virtus/protecting_children.cfm)
- **Protecting God Children preview:**  
[www.virtusonline.org/virtus/preview\\_pgc.cfm](http://www.virtusonline.org/virtus/preview_pgc.cfm)  
[https://www.virtusonline.org/virtus/preview\\_pgc.cfm](https://www.virtusonline.org/virtus/preview_pgc.cfm)
- **VIRTUS Online:** [www.virtusonline.org/virtus/](http://www.virtusonline.org/virtus/)

## **Child Abuse Health Information**

### **The Child Assessment Center at the Center for Family Safety and Healing (Nationwide Children's Hospital)**

655 Livingston Ave., Columbus, OH 43205

Phone: 614-722-8200

Hours: 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

**Family Support Program's Intake Coordinator:** 614-722-8212

### **Catholic Social Services**

197 E. Gay Street

Columbus, OH 43215

614-221-5891

### **CSS West Columbus: WEST COLUMBUS**

Our Lady of Guadalupe Center

441 Industry Drive

Columbus, OH 43204

614-340-7061

### **CHOICES for Victims of Domestic Violence (Franklin County)**

614-224-4663

24/7 crisis line

[www.franklincountyohio.gov/children\\_services/](http://www.franklincountyohio.gov/children_services/)

614-275-2650

855 W. Mound Street

Columbus, OH 43223



## Additional Resources & Information

### EMERGENCY

911

#### Services for Children & Teens:

Buckeye Ranch	614-875-2371
Community for New Direction	614-272-1464
Dir. for Youth & Families	614-294-2661
Franklin Co. Children Services	614-229-7000
Huckleberry House	614-294-5553
Natl. Teen Dating Abuse Hotline	866-331-9474
National Youth Advocate Program	614-487-8758
Nationwide Children's Behavioral Health Services	614-355-8080
St. Vincent's Family Center	614-252-0731
The Center for Family Safety and Healing	614-722-8200

#### Services for Adult Victims:

Beit Ohr (Contact Mike Broidy)	614-449-4200
BRAVO (GLBT Services)	866-862-7286
CHOICES, 24hr crisis/shelter	614-224-4663
Cols. Urban League, Victim Assistance Program	614-257-6300
Mt. Carmel, Crime & Trauma	614-234-5900
Natl. Dom. Violence Hotline	800-799-7233
Ohio Dom. Viol. Network	800-934-9840
Shalom Task Force	888-883-2323

#### Services for Seniors:

Adult Protective Services	614-525-4348
Long Term Care Ombudsman Prog.	800-282-1206

#### Legal Resources:

Cap. Univ. Family Adv. Clinic	614-236-6779
City Prosecutor's Office	614-645-7483
Franklin Co. Prosecutor's Office	614-525-3555
Legal Aid Society of Cols.	614-224-8374

#### Batterers' Intervention Programs:

Africentric Personal Development Shop	614-253-4448
Crossroads	614-445-0352
Southeast, Inc.	614-225-0990

#### Other Programs & Services:

ASHA-Ray of Hope	614-565-2918
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Asian American Comm. Services	614-220-4023 x235
Capital Area Humane Society	614-777-7387
Catholic Social Services	614-221-5891
Elizabeth Blackwell Center	614-566-5353
Jewish Family Services	614-231-1890
New Directions Career Center	614-849-0028
OH Attorney General Crime Victims Services	800-582-2877
Ohio Hispanic Coalition	614-840-9934
Rape Helpline (24-hr)	614-267-7020
SARNCO (Sexual Assault Services)	614-566-4414
Suicide Prevention Hotline	614-221-5445
The Somali Women & Children's Alliance	614-473-9999

**The Center for Family Safety and Healing  
Help Victims of Family Violence**

No one deserves to be abused. Family violence has no boundaries and includes all types of violence and abuse towards children, teens, adults and the elderly. If you or someone you know is being abused, call any of the numbers listed on this emergency agency and phone number list. Remember, you are not alone.

**How to Protect Yourself**

- Talk to someone you trust. A family member, friend, neighbor, teacher, faith leader or doctor – they can be a good source of support and help.
- Contact community resources for help. They can assist you if you need a place to stay or need legal protection from the person who is abusing you or other family members.
- If you are in an emergency situation or immediate danger, call 911. The local law enforcement can get you and your family away from risk.
- If you are an adult, make a safety plan in case you decide to leave an abusive relationship. Set aside some cash, important documents, (birth certificates, social security cards, etc.), a set of keys and a change of clothes that you can access easily in a crisis situation.

**How to Help Others**

If you see someone who is being assaulted or witness a child, teen or elder in immediate danger, call 911 or local law enforcement immediately.

**To help an adult who is in an abusive relationship:**

- Plan what you want to say, determine a good time and place to talk.
- Ask questions like “How can I help you? What do you want to do about the situation?”  
Listen without judgment. Do not moralize or criticize. Give the victim plenty of time to talk.
- Don't say “Just get out” – it may not be safe advice.
- Let the victim know that you believe verbal, emotional or physical abuse in a relationship is never acceptable.

- Provide the person with information about local resources that can help.

**To help a teen who is in an abusive dating relationship:**

- Share your concerns with the parent/guardian or trusted adult.

**To help a child or teen who is being abused:**

- Report your suspicions of child abuse to Franklin County Children Services. Calls are confidential.

**To help a senior citizen who is being abused:**

- Report your suspicions of elder abuse or neglect to Adult Protective Services. Calls are confidential.

**To help someone who is a batterer:**

- Refer the person to one of the intervention programs listed on this sheet.