



FOR THE SAKE OF GOD'S CHILDREN

DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

Revised 2013

Website

The entire manual is provided on line for use by parish leadership. Please go to www.cdow.org and click on the *For the Sake of God's Children* logo.

HISTORY

FOR THE SAKE OF GOD'S CHILDREN

The document *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* was approved by the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops (USCCB) in June of 2002. In July of that same year Bishop Saltarelli appointed three committees to develop the response of the Diocese of Wilmington. These committees were composed of lay men and women from throughout the Diocese in differing areas of competence. Additionally, priest representation and staff members were appointed. These forty men and women worked for seven months to produce a final recommendation to the Bishop in March of 2003. The committees determined that the recommendation to the Bishop was to create our own safe environment program and with the submission of "For the Sake of God's Children" the task was complete. The Bishop approved the program and called for its immediate implementation.

In May of 2003 the Diocese convened more than 15 meetings around the Diocese for parish leadership, priests, employees and deacons. Special sessions were conducted later that summer for seminarians.

By August of 2003 all priests, deacons, Diocesan employees and all those who either as employee or volunteer worked on a regular recurring basis with young people were introduced to the program. Thus began the ongoing process of background screening, ethical standards of behavior/ covenants and the educational processes aimed at maintaining a safe and secure environment for the children.

In the spring of 2008 the first cycle of five years renewals and updated educational processes was initiated. During the early months of 2009 Bishop Malooly called for the implementation of a suitability process for all religious who live in/work in the Diocese. In 2010 and again in 2013 the manual and its components were updated.

This manual presents the processes for use in parishes and their programs for completion of background checks, ethical standards or covenants and safe environment checklists for activities involving youth. Additionally the manual provides many forms, resource materials and educational helps for use in parish and school communities.

The Diocesan website contains the full program at www.cdow.org. Click on the logo. For additional information you may contact: Diocesan Human Resources Director at 302-573-3126.

INTRODUCTION

A SAFE ENVIRONMENT IS A FRAME OF MIND, NOT JUST A LOCATION

This manual is part of the Diocese of Wilmington's safe environment program: **For the Sake of God's Children**. All of these efforts focus on the protection of our children. You will find within the program, guidance for all who serve others that all Church Personnel may remain faithful and truly exemplify Christian ethics and personal integrity in all relationships.

We use the term "Church Personnel" to indicate all who are accountable for creating a Safe Environment. The term Church Personnel is defined in Section One, page 5.

The purpose of this manual is to promote awareness through education, to prevent wrongdoing by establishing best practices and to change behavior through training. While not intended to be a comprehensive manual, it is also not intended as a list of suggestions. What appears in this manual are the **requirements** of the Diocese of Wilmington. By our baptism, we are all called into ministry to, with and for one another. Creating a Safe Environment is paramount to our ministry.

WHAT IS A SAFE ENVIRONMENT?

As a faith-filled people, we value and honor every individual as created in the image and likeness of God. In the works and ministries of the Diocese of Wilmington we, therefore, provide a safe environment for children, young people and their families. Honesty, trust, and mutual respect frame an environment where healthy and responsible relationships prevail, boundaries are clear and Behavioral Standards are mutually embraced. We are committed to providing for the safety and protection of God's children through a selfless sharing of our gifts and talents.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is “For the Sake of God’s Children”?

For the Sake of God’s Children is the comprehensive program developed by the diocese in response to the Charter adopted by the bishops at their semi-annual meeting, held in Dallas, Texas in June 2002. Among the aspects of the program are:

- a process of assessing suitability for ministry through criminal background checks
- Ethical and Behavioral Standards for all Church Personnel
- Guidelines for establishing a safe environment in the parish communities and institutions of the diocese
- Educational information for training.

Who is affected by the program?

Parishes and other institutions are responsible for the execution of many aspects of the Program. Diocesan offices assist the parishes in the process and parishes are held accountable for the implementation of the Program at the local level. Parishes are held accountable for the timely execution of various aspects of the program so that all professional Church Personnel and all non-compensated personnel who have regular recurring contact with children and youth (five hours or more a year) are required to participate in the training and have the appropriate background checks completed before beginning their ministry.

How is the program implemented?

Each parish/school annually conducts an orientation, training program for all employees/volunteers within the respective areas of ministry. During this session those engaged in ministry review the program, receive training relative to Safe Environments and if necessary complete the forms for background checks, volunteer covenant or /and Ethical Standards. Diocesan Offices with responsibility for ministry over site are available to assist parishes and other programs with this process.

What if we do not have a professional staff for a specific parish ministry?

You may designate someone from your various ministries to become the person accountable for overseeing the implementation of the Charter in your parish. This person would be the compliance coordinator for the parish.

Why are we doing this?

In the wake of the scandals that were brought to light in the last few years, the bishops of the United States examined all of their policies and procedures relating to the protection of children and youth particularly with regard to sexual abuse. They determined that these new times demanded a much stronger and more comprehensive approach throughout the Church to ensure the protection of children and youth.

What about criminal background checks?

All Diocesan personnel and parish personnel who have regular and recurring contact with youth are required to have a criminal background check as a requirement for employment. Volunteers who interact on a regular or ongoing basis with children or youth are required to have a criminal background check prior to being eligible for service.

How do I explain this to our volunteers?

We have undertaken these steps to do all that we can reasonably do to make sure our environments are safe and our children and youth as well as the adults engaged in activities at the parish or diocesan level are protected.

What if someone does not have a background check done?

Only cleared adults over the age of 18 are eligible for service in a leadership role with young people.

How long does it take to have a check done?

If the person has lived in Delaware or Maryland for the last seven years, the background check can be completed in less than two weeks. If the person has lived in several states over the last several years, the process may take a little longer. It is the responsibility of the parish or institution to provide training and complete the local process.

What if I have had a background check at work or for another diocese?

If the background check has been completed by a state agency within the last five years and the individual can provide the report from the agency which conducted the investigation it will be accepted as a substitute for the Diocesan process. The individual is required to complete any other parish/institutional requirements for placement. However, it is important to note that only reports issued by a state or the agency identified by the diocese are acceptable, not security clearances. If another Diocese has provided a certificate which indicates an individual has complied with the requirements of the charter, that will be accepted provided the Diocese providing the certificate is in compliance with the

Charter. _

Will the background check have to be repeated every year?

No. However, every five years individuals will be asked to renew the process. The Behavioral Standards for Church Personnel require all individuals report any changes that may prevent their continued work with youth or young people.

What are the Ethical Standards?

The Standards for Church Personnel are clear and concise statements that set forth behaviors which are appropriate and acceptable in our ministerial environments. The Standards are specific and clear, are expected to be part of ongoing supervision with employees and will be a part of annual evaluation for employees. The Volunteer Covenant is a set of behavioral standards which detail expectations of our volunteers as they engage in ministerial activities in our communities. These are renewed annually.

Aren't our environments already safe?

The Diocese is confident the programs held at our parishes and schools provide adequate supervision and an environment in which no child or young person is intentionally harmed. "For the Sake of God's Children" provides guidelines, requirements and a framework for insuring environments that meet or exceed policies in place in the Diocese of Wilmington.

What kind of education is available for adults and young people?

Adults:

The Diocese has created three brochures for use with our adults, one for parents and parish /school communities, one for volunteers and one for employees. Additionally there is an on line presentation at the diocesan website: www.cdow.org as well as the video : Child Abuse, How to See It, How to Stop It.

Children:

The Diocese developed a pre-K thru 12 curriculum entitled : Keeping Our Promises, which is utilized in all of our schools, religious education programs and other ministries with young people as appropriate.

When did the provisions of the Charter go into effect?

September 1, of 2003 was the date that the background check policy was implemented in all parishes and institutions of the Diocese. The provisions of the Charter went into effect at that time. Training for parish leadership and subsequent training on the local level began in May 2003. New personnel

are required to have a background check as part of their initial screening for employment or participation in a parish or school program

Parishes and institutions began implementing other aspects of the plan during this same timeframe. Each year the Diocese monitors the implementation of the various parts of the program to develop a report which is required by the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops.

POLICIES
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- I. Criminal background checks are required for individuals currently employed or volunteering, being hired or beginning their ministry, referred to here as Church Personnel, in the Diocese if they are to have regular, recurring contact with minors or young people:
- ❖ All paid parish and diocesan employees, priests, seminarians, deacons, religious brothers and women religious.
 - ❖ All volunteers (over 18) whose ministry will require their close association with minors in Diocesan or parish activities on a regular, recurring basis, and any volunteer who is to serve as a chaperone for activities involving minors on an overnight basis, if only a single activity.

Regular recurring contact with minors is understood to mean those persons who will work or volunteer with children or young persons more than five hours or more a year in their church service.

All employees and volunteers will have a cleared certificate on file prior to employment or volunteer services beginning.

- II. For those identified above, employment, ministerial placement or volunteer services are contingent upon favorable results of the Criminal Background Check.
- III. All criminal background check screenings will be conducted either by the States of Maryland or Delaware or by an investigating agency identified by the Catholic Diocese of Wilmington. Background checks from others states will be accepted provided they were conducted within five years of submission.
- IV. Volunteers 18 and younger are not required to have a background check but will always be supervised by a **cleared** adult when working with minors.
- V. All Church Personnel will review the Diocesan Standards for Ethical and Behavioral Norms and sign an Acknowledgement of Receipt Form. All Church Personnel will annually review the Diocesan Standards as part of the annual performance appraisal process. (Deacons, Seminarians, Employees)
Volunteers will annually review and sign the Volunteer Covenant.

- VI. All employees and volunteers must complete a renewal of their criminal background check every five years. This renewal will be accomplished through the services of an investigating agency identified by the Catholic Diocese of Wilmington.
- VII. The educational process for all those working with young people is required. This may include the video, pamphlet, presentation of the program power point.
- VIII. There must be two cleared adults present when working with children and young people. In the case of Religious Education classes where the DRE is unable to recruit adequate aides to insure implementation of this rule the follow applies:

The door of the room must be left open, the teacher being visible at all times from the hallway and a hall monitor will observe the classroom on a routine basis.

- IX. International students enrolled in any diocesan/parish school not be housed with any school, parish or diocesan employee
- X. Posting or accessing pornography or other offensive legal or illegal material, including hate literature, defamatory, libelous, offensive, or demeaning material online is unacceptable behavior. Such behavior is subject to investigation and can result in strong disciplinary action. Posting or accessing child pornography is a criminal offense. If child pornography is discovered the Diocese has an obligation under law to report to civil authority.

Application for employees: Such behaviors will be addressed with progressive discipline and could result in termination.

Application for seminarians: Such behaviors will be addressed and may result in dismissal from studies for the priesthood.

Application for priests and deacons: Such behaviors will be addressed including a possible psychological assessment to determine appropriate follow up. If assessment is required, the priest/deacon will be removed

from active ministry during the assessment period and restored to ministry contingent on outcomes of the assessment and treatment.

Insert the Revised Policies and Procedures Governing Allegations of sexual Abuse of Minors, Diocese of Wilmington Rev. 8/12

Rev 11/12