

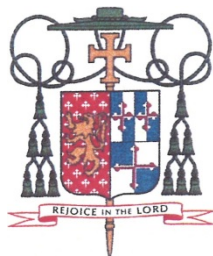


FOR THE SAKE OF GOD'S CHILDREN

DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON
Revised 2015

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MOST REVEREND W. FRANCIS MALOOLY, DD
BISHOP OF WILMINGTON

My Friends:

In 2002 the Bishops of the United States promulgated the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. Among the mandates of the Charter is the requirement that each Diocese develop a set of policies and procedures for all Church organizations which provide effective and practical protection of children. In our Diocese the policies and procedures are found in our comprehensive program called "For the Sake of God's Children."

This program, developed specifically for the Diocese of Wilmington, contains three important elements: 1) the policies and procedures for background checks for all church personnel, paid and volunteer, who work with children, 2) the professional standards which identify those attitudes and actions that guide our service to children and others, and 3) guidelines for establishing and maintaining safe environments in our parishes, schools, and other institutions.

To minister in the name of Jesus Christ is a great privilege and an awesome responsibility. As ministers of the Lord we must act in ways that are in conformity with the attitudes and actions He lived and taught. To accomplish this faithfully requires our personal prayerful reflection and an occasional personal inventory of our attitudes and ministry styles. Our diocesan program, "For the Sake of God's Children," sets before us those behaviors, attitudes, and actions which exemplify what is required of us in dealing with every person, but especially with the young. It is my desire that everyone in ministry be committed to abide by the policies and procedures set forth in this program.

Wishing you every blessing and grateful for your fidelity and concern for our diocesan church and our children, I remain,

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "W. Francis Malooly".

Most Reverend Francis Malooly
Bishop of Wilmington

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 Safe Environments Coordinator at 302-295-0668.

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.

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.