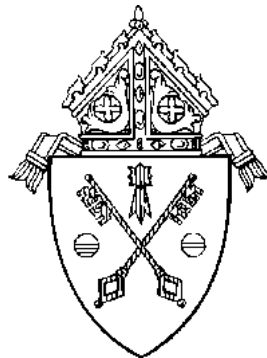


DIOCESE OF SCRANTON

CHILD PROTECTION

SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM



HANDBOOK OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

EFFECTIVE JANUARY 2019

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**Diocese of Scranton
Human Resources Office
Safe Environment Program**

Mission:

The mission of the Safe Environment Program is to insure that the Diocese of Scranton strictly follows the ***Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*** as set forth by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Purpose:

The ***Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*** and the ***Essential Norms*** places a mandate upon every U.S. Diocese to establish educational and training programs that promote the recognition of and effective response to the problem of sexual abuse. To this end, priests, deacons, seminarians, religious, lay employees and volunteers shall participate in all programs mandated by the Diocese of Scranton regarding the nature, effect, and prevention of sexual abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult. These programs are intended to prevent abuse by increasing awareness of indicators of inappropriate behavior as well as teaching appropriate behavioral boundaries.

Procedures to create a safe environment in all diocesan locations are designed with the purpose of:

- Insuring a thorough background screening is completed for all clergy, paid employees and volunteers supervising children or vulnerable adults
- Providing training in recognizing and reporting signs of abuse to appropriate civil and Church authorities
- Implementing safe environment principles and building resistance to abuse by teaching our children in schools and parishes about healthy relationships (*Refer to Diocese of Scranton Codes of Conduct*)
- Holding all clergy, paid employees and volunteers accountable to a Christ-centered pastoral code of conduct

Victim Assistance:

The Victim Assistance Coordinator (VAC) is an integral component of the Diocese of Scranton's Policy for Response to Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors.

The role of the Victim Assistance Coordinator is to facilitate the immediate pastoral care of persons that claim to have been sexually abused by a cleric (i.e., bishop, priest or deacon) when they were minors. The Coordinator responds promptly to persons who contact the Diocese concerning sexual abuse of a minor. The purpose of the meeting is to acknowledge the accusation, empathetically listen and inform him/her of any services that may be available. If requested and as appropriate, the VAC will assist the individual in obtaining outpatient counseling, recommend licensed and qualified providers and facilitate spiritual and mental health support.

Definitions:

Safe Environment Coordinator – The Safe Environment Coordinator is the Diocesan staff person charged with the oversight and direction of the Safe Environment program in parishes, schools and organizations in the Diocese of Scranton.

Diocesan Review Board – The Diocesan Review Board, established by the Bishop, is composed of at least five persons of outstanding integrity and good judgment in full communion with the Church. A Review Board Member advises and makes recommendations to the Bishop regarding the response to accusations of sexual abuse of a minor.

Safe Environment Training – The Diocese of Scranton implemented the “Protecting God’s Children for Adults” component of VIRTUS. The training educates participants on the nature of child sexual abuse. It also recommends effective strategies for the prevention of abuse.

The Safe Environment Program for Children targets students in Grades K – 12. The curriculum creates awareness of situations that could lead to sexual abuse. It encourages communication between children and parents/caregivers to assure that incidents are promptly reported.

Codes of Pastoral Conduct – The Codes of Conduct specify boundaries of proper behavior that are to be followed whenever children and all members of the faithful gather for spiritual, educational or social activities conducted under the auspices of the Church. All clergy, religious, employees and volunteers serving the Diocese of Scranton are required to abide by the Codes.

**Diocese of Scranton
Human Resources Office
Safe Environment Program**

Policy for Response to Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors

The Diocese of Scranton formally established a “*Policy Concerning Clerics Accused of Sexual Abuse of Minors*” in March, 1993. When the bishops of the USCCB adopted a comprehensive plan to deal with this important issue by promulgating *the Charter, the Essential Norms* and the *Statement of Episcopal Commitment*, many of the provisions of the Charter were already contained in the Diocesan policy. Notwithstanding, the Diocese took the opportunity to refine and expand its procedures accordingly, and in April 2003, the Diocesan policy was revised.

When the Most Reverend Joseph C. Bambera, D.D., J.C.L. was ordained and installed as the Tenth Bishop of Scranton in April, 2010, he determined that the Diocesan “*Policy Concerning Clerics Accused of Sexual Abuse of Minors*” needed to be reviewed. Bishop Bambera came to this determination after visiting with and listening to members of his Diocese express confusion and pain due to the sex abuse crisis that sadly continues to unfold in our Church – a crisis that has rightfully shaken the confidence that so many have had in the leaders of our Church, priests and bishops alike – a crisis that has been an embarrassment and source of great pain for many faithful priests – a crisis that despite the passage of time, still inflicts real pain and devastation in the lives of victims.

After prayerful reflection, extensive research and study, and purposeful review by several external and internal entities, including the Diocesan Review Board, this *Policy for Response to Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors* was created and approved for implementation in the Diocese of Scranton on April 15, 2013. The intention of this policy is to be in conformity with all provisions contained in the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, the *Essential Norms for Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors* and the *Statement of Episcopal Commitment*. This policy is designed to ensure appropriate responses to accusations of sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults by clergy, religious, employees and volunteers (cf. *USCCB Charter*, Note). It addresses preventing sexual abuse through education and screening, reporting abuse; providing pastoral assistance and promoting healing and reconciliation to persons affected by abuse; cooperating with civil authorities; disciplining offenders; and the processing of accusations. The policy was revised to reflect changes in the Child Protective Services Laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Policy changes went into effect August 1, 2015.

Please see the Pastor of your parish or the Principal of your school for a copy of the Diocese’s policy. The policy may also be obtained by visiting the Diocese of Scranton’s website: www.dioceseofscranton.org and clicking on the Child Protection/Victim Assistance tab. The policy is available in both English and Spanish.

Reference and Resource Guide

To verify compliance with the protocols of the Diocese of Scranton Safe Environment Program, schools, parishes and diocesan organizations should have the following documentation for employees and volunteers that have direct contact with children:

1. PA State Police Criminal History Check - Renewals every 60 months
2. PA Child Abuse History Certification - Renewals every 60 months
3. FBI Federal Check with Fingerprinting (If Applicable) - Renewals every 60 months
4. Verification that the individual completed Safe Environment training
5. Diocese of Scranton Code of Pastoral Conduct or Youth Code of Conduct signed by the employee/volunteer
6. If applicable, verification that the individual completed training on mandated reporting of child abuse

A Safe Environment Guide can be found on the next nine pages. This Guide was developed to assist you in determining which procedures must be completed for employees and those volunteers who are expected to interact with children.

WHO?	WHAT?	WHEN?	REQUIREMENTS	HOW OFTEN
<u>Employees:</u> HAVING DIRECT CONTACT AND ROUTINE INTERACTION WITH CHILDREN	Criminal History Check through PA State Police	At point of hire	Results of Criminal History Check	To be repeated every 60 months
	Child Abuse History Certification through PA Child Welfare Portal, PA Dept. of Human Services	At point of hire	Results of Child Abuse History Certification	To be repeated every 60 months
	FBI Federal Check with Fingerprinting	At point of hire	Results of FBI Fingerprinting	To be repeated every 60 months
	Diocese of Scranton Code of Pastoral Conduct	At point of hire	Signed Acknowledgement Form in Records	At point of hire and following any subsequent revisions
	Protecting God's Children for Adults (VIRTUS) Program	Within 90 days of hire	Verification through VIRTUS online, completion certificate and/or sign-in sheets	One time with online continuing education bulletins

	Child Abuse Recognition and Mandated Reporting Training	Within 90 days of hire	Verification through completion certificate	Repeated following revisions in the law
WHO?	WHAT?	WHEN?	REQUIREMENTS	HOW OFTEN
<u>Employees:</u> NO CONTACT WITH CHILDREN	Criminal Background Check through Private Vendor	At point of hire	Results of Criminal History Check	To be repeated every 60 months
	Diocese of Scranton Code of Pastoral Conduct	At point of hire	Signed Acknowledgement Form in Records	At point of hire and following any subsequent revisions
	Protecting God's Children for Adults (VIRTUS) Program	Within 90 days of hire	Verification through VIRTUS online, completion certificate and/or sign-in sheets	One time with online continuing education bulletins

WHO?	WHAT?	WHEN?	REQUIREMENTS	HOW OFTEN
<p><u>PARISH VOLUNTEERS</u> (Age 18 and Older) HAVING DIRECT CONTACT AND ROUTINE INTERACTION WITH CHILDREN Including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCD/PREP Directors, Coordinators & Teachers • Coaches • Youth Ministers & Assistants • Teacher Assistants • Pre-School & Extended Care Volunteers • Boy Scout Leaders & Staff • Knights of Columbus Squires & Youth Program Leaders 	Criminal History Check through PA State Police	<i>Before working with minors</i>	Results of Criminal History Check	To be repeated every 60 months
	Child Abuse History Certification through PA Child Welfare Portal, PA Dept. of Human Services	<i>Before working with minors</i>	Results of Child Abuse History Certification	To be repeated every 60 months
	VOLUNTEERS THAT HAVE RESIDED IN PA FOR THE PAST 10 YEARS: Volunteer Affidavit	<i>Before working with minors</i>	Signed Acknowledgement Form in Records	To be signed again upon renewal of clearances
	VOLUNTEERS THAT HAVE NOT RESIDED IN PA FOR THE PAST 10 YEARS: FBI Check with Fingerprinting	<i>Before working with minors</i>	Results of FBI Fingerprinting	Required only once after residency is established
	Diocese of Scranton Code of Pastoral Conduct	<i>Before working with minors</i>	Signed Acknowledgement Form in Records	Prior to beginning service and following any subsequent revisions

	Protecting God's Children for Adults (VIRTUS)Program	Within 90 days of beginning service	Verification through VIRTUS online, completion certificate and/or sign-in sheets.	One time with online continuing education bulletins
	Child Abuse Recognition and Mandated Reporting Training	Within 90 days of beginning service	Verification through completion certificate	Repeated following revisions in the law

WHO?	WHAT?	WHEN?	REQUIREMENTS	HOW OFTEN
<u>CURRENT SCHOOL EMPLOYEES</u> (Teachers – FT, PT, Long-term Subs, Paid Coaches, Support Staff)	Criminal History Check through PA State Police	Prior to expiration of current clearances	Results of Criminal History Check	To be repeated every 60 months
	Child Abuse History Certification through PA Child Welfare Portal, PA Dept. of Human Services	Prior to expiration of current clearances	Results of Child Abuse History Certification	To be repeated every 60 months
	FBI Federal Check with Fingerprinting	Prior to expiration of current clearances	Results of FBI Fingerprinting	To be repeated every 60 months
	Diocese of Scranton Code of Pastoral Conduct	At point of hire	Signed Acknowledgment Form in Records	At point of hire and following any subsequent revisions
	Protecting God’s Children for Adults (VIRTUS) Program	Within 90 days of hire	Verification through VIRTUS online, completion certificate and/or sign-in sheets	One time with online continuing education bulletins
	ACT 126 Child Abuse Recognition and Reporting Training	Within 90 days of hire	Verification through completion certificate	Repeated every five years
	ACT 24 Arrest/Conviction Report and Certification	<i>Before</i> working with minors	Signed Acknowledgement Form in Records	One time
<u>REQUIREMENTS FOR “NEW” SCHOOL EMPLOYEES</u> (Teachers – FT, PT, Long-term subs, Paid Coaches, Support Staff, Student Teachers)	Criminal History Check through PA State Police	At point of hire	Results of Criminal History Check	To be repeated every 60 months
	Child Abuse History Certification through PA Child Welfare Portal, PA Dept. of Human Services	At point of hire	Results of Child Abuse History Certification	To be repeated every 60 months

	FBI Federal Check with Fingerprinting	At point of hire	Results of FBI Fingerprinting	To be repeated every 60 months
	Diocese of Scranton Code of Pastoral Conduct	At point of hire	Signed Acknowledgment Form in Records	At point of hire and following any subsequent revisions
	Protecting God's Children for Adults (VIRTUS) Program	Within 90 days of hire	Verification through VIRTUS online, completion certificate and/or sign-in sheets.	One time with online continuing education bulletins
	ACT 126 Child Abuse Recognition and Reporting Training	Within 90 days of hire	Verification through completion certificate	Repeated every five years
	ACT 24 Arrest/Conviction Report and Certification	<i>Before</i> working with minors	Signed Acknowledgement Form in Records	One time

WHO?	WHAT?	WHEN?	REQUIREMENTS	HOW OFTEN
<u>Daily and Short Term Substitute Teachers</u>	Criminal History Check through PA State Police	At point of hire	Results of Criminal History Check	To be repeated every 60 months
	Child Abuse History Certification through PA Child Welfare Portal, PA Dept. of Human Services	At point of hire	Results of Child Abuse History Certification	To be repeated every 60 months
	FBI Federal Check with Fingerprinting	At point of hire	Results of FBI Fingerprinting	To be repeated every 60 months
	Diocese of Scranton Code of Pastoral Conduct	At point of hire	Signed Acknowledgment Form in Records	At point of hire and following any subsequent revisions
	ACT 24 Arrest/Conviction Report and Certification	<i>Before</i> working with minors	Signed Acknowledgement Form in Records	One time

	ACT 126 Child Abuse Recognition and Reporting Training	<i>Before working with minors</i>	Verification through completion certificate	Repeated every five years
	Protecting God's Children for Adults (VIRTUS)Program		<i>Encouraged but not required</i>	
<u>Student Field Observers</u>	Criminal History Check through PA State Police	Prior to Placement	Results of Criminal History Check	NA
	Child Abuse History Certification through PA Child Welfare Portal, PA Dept. of Human Services	Prior to Placement	Results of Child Abuse History Certification	NA
	FBI Federal Check with Fingerprinting	Prior to Placement	Results of FBI Fingerprinting	NA
	Diocese of Scranton Code of Pastoral Conduct	Prior to Placement	Signed Acknowledgment Form in Records	NA
	ACT 24 Arrest/Conviction Report and Certification	Prior to Placement	Signed Acknowledgement Form in Records	NA
	ACT 126 Child Abuse Recognition and Reporting Training	Prior to Placement	Verification through completion certificate	NA
	Protecting God's Children for Adults (VIRTUS)Program		<i>Encouraged but not required</i>	

WHO?	WHAT?	WHEN?	REQUIREMENTS	HOW OFTEN
<p>SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS (Age 18 and Older) HAVING DIRECT CONTACT AND ROUTINE INTERACTION WITH CHILDREN Including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaches • Homeroom Parents • Cafeteria Workers • Pre-School & Extended Care Volunteers • Field Trip Chaperones 	Criminal History Check through PA State Police	<i>Before working with minors</i>	Results of Criminal History Check	To be repeated every 60 months
	Child Abuse History Certification through PA Child Welfare Portal, PA Dept. of Human Services	<i>Before working with minors</i>	Results of Child Abuse History Certification	To be repeated every 60 months
	VOLUNTEERS THAT HAVE RESIDED IN PA FOR THE PAST 10 YEARS: Volunteer Affidavit	<i>Before working with minors</i>	Signed Acknowledgement Form in Records	To be signed again upon renewal of clearances
	VOLUNTEERS THAT HAVE NOT RESIDED IN PA FOR THE PAST 10 YEARS: FBI Check with Fingerprinting	<i>Before working with minors</i>	Results of FBI Fingerprinting	Required only once after residency is established
	Diocese of Scranton Code of Pastoral Conduct	<i>Before working with minors</i>	Signed Acknowledgement Form in Records	Prior to beginning service and following any subsequent revisions
	Protecting God's Children for Adults (VIRTUS)Program	Within 90 days of beginning service	Verification through VIRTUS online, completion certificate and/or sign-in sheets.	One time

WHO?	WHAT?	WHEN?	REQUIREMENTS	HOW OFTEN
<u>Intermediate Unit and Behavioral Health Agency Personnel working on-site</u>	Clearances and training will be provided through employer. Documentation by employer on file at diocesan location.			
	Diocese of Scranton Code of Pastoral Conduct	<i>Before</i> working with minors	Signed Acknowledgement Form in Records	Prior to beginning service and following any subsequent revisions

WHO?	WHAT?	WHEN?	REQUIREMENTS	HOW OFTEN
<u>Contracted Services (i.e. Bus drivers, Cafeteria workers)</u>	Clearances and training will be provided through employer. Documentation by employer on file at diocesan location.			
	Diocese of Scranton Code of Pastoral Conduct	<i>Before</i> working with minors	Signed Acknowledgement Form in Records	Prior to beginning service and following any subsequent revisions

WHO?	WHAT?	WHEN?	REQUIREMENTS	HOW OFTEN
<u>Independent Contractors working in Diocesan Schools and Childcare Settings (i.e. Plumbers)</u>	Criminal Background Check through Private Vendor	<i>Before</i> work is initiated	Results of Criminal History Check	To be repeated every five years, if applicable

LIST OF OFFENSES: WHO IS PROHIBITED FROM SERVING?

Past convictions of certain crimes and offenses permanently disqualify an individual from serving as an employee or volunteer. They cannot be convicted of one or more of the following crimes reportable under Title 18 of the PA Consolidated Statutes or equivalent crime in another state, territory, commonwealth or foreign nation:

- Chapter 25 (relating to criminal homicide)
- Section 2702 (relating to aggravated assault)
- Section 2709.1 (relating to stalking)
- Section 2901 (relating to kidnapping)
- Section 2902 (relating to unlawful restraint)
- Section 3121 (relating to rape)
- Section 3122.1 (relating to statutory sexual assault)
- Section 3123 (relating to involuntary deviate sexual intercourse)
- Section 3124.1 (relating to sexual assault)
- Section 3125 (relating to aggravated indecent assault)
- Section 3126 (relating to indecent assault)
- Section 3127 (relating to indecent exposure)
- Section 4302 (relating to incest)
- Section 4303 (relating to concealing death of a child)
- Section 4304 (relating to endangering welfare of children)
- Section 4305 (relating to dealing in infant children)
- A felony offense under section 5902(b) (relating to prostitution and related offenses)
- Section 5903(c) or (d) (relating to obscene and other sexual materials and performances)
- Section 6301(a) (1) (relating to corruption of minors)
- Section 6312 (relating to sexual abuse of children)
- Section 6318 (relating to unlawful contact with minor)
- An offense designated as a felony under the Controlled Substance, Drug, Device and Cosmetic Act during the five year time period immediately preceding today's date
- An offense similar in nature to those crimes listed in clauses (1) and (2) under the laws or former laws of the United States or one of its territories or possessions, another state, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico or a foreign nation, or under a former law of this Commonwealth.
- An attempt, solicitation or conspiracy to commit any of the offenses set forth above

The employee or volunteer will be dismissed if named as a perpetrator of a founded report of child abuse or convicted of any of the crimes listed above subsequent to providing the required clearances. The Diocese of Scranton retains the right to refuse permission to serve as an employee/volunteer for any reason that, in its judgment, renders the applicant unsuitable to serve in that capacity.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT TRAINING
VIRTUS: *Protecting God's Children Program*
Policy and Procedures

Beginning in 2003, the Diocese of Scranton implemented a multi-faceted national program called *VIRTUS Protecting God's Children*. Sessions, which include videos and discussion, have been conducted throughout the 11 counties of the diocese. Participants obtain materials at the live session and continue their education thru monthly online bulletins.

VIRTUS, derived from the Latin word meaning moral strength and excellence, represented a behavior and way of life in ancient times that aspired to the highest moral code and appropriate human interaction. The modern-day program which carries its name aspires to uphold these values. **Participating in the VIRTUS training program applies only to adults 18 years and older.**

To access a current schedule of VIRTUS training sessions, visit www.dioceseofscranton.org

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the VIRTUS program?

The VIRTUS *Protecting God's Children Program* is a child sexual abuse prevention training. By attending the program, participants increase their awareness of the nature of child sexual abuse and how they, as part of the Catholic community, can prevent further abuse from happening. VIRTUS sessions are offered throughout the year at parishes, diocesan schools and diocesan organizations.

2. Who is required to attend?

- a. ALL clergy (Priests and Deacons)
- b. ALL diocesan employees
- c. Volunteers that have regular and repeated contact with youth

3. I hold a professional license, am I still required to attend?

Yes, regardless of any licensing, training, profession or experience you have, if you are going to volunteer with youth or are employed by the Diocese of Scranton, you must attend a VIRTUS session. This includes but is not limited to law enforcement, nurses, doctors, counselors/psychologists, teachers, administrators and probation officers.

4. I have completed the Boy Scout Leader training, do I need to attend VIRTUS too?

If your Scout troop is chartered thru the parish, you are also required to attend VIRTUS training. The Boy Scout leader training is excellent and sets a standard of expectations for leaders. However, it does not contain the same messages found in the VIRTUS session. Therefore, in order to assure a common base of understanding among all those who serve within the Diocese of Scranton, you are required to attend.

5. I attended a VIRTUS session in a different diocese, do I need to attend another session in the Diocese of Scranton?

No, if you attended a session in another diocese you are not required to repeat the training. Please email helpdesk@virtus.org to request your account be transferred to the Diocese of Scranton.

6. Where do I find the schedule for VIRTUS training?

The Diocese of Scranton website posts a current list of all training opportunities. Visit www.dioceseofscranton.org

7. How do I register online?

Register online at www.virtusonline.org

- a. Click on the registration link in the left hand column
- b. Select "Scranton (Diocese)" from the drop down box
- c. Create your own User ID and Password
- d. Follow the screen prompts to continue the online registration

8. Can I register to attend a VIRTUS session on my smartphone?

Yes, you can now register to attend a VIRTUS session using most smartphones including iPhones and Androids.

9. How do I change the email address in my account at www.virtus.org?

You may update your email address (and other account information) by going to www.virtus.org, logging in and clicking on "Update my Account".

10. How do I know if a session is cancelled due to bad weather?

If parish events or school classes are cancelled where the VIRTUS session was scheduled to take place, the session will also be cancelled. If possible, notification will be posted on the diocesan website. If you are unsure, contact the location that is hosting the session.

11. How do I print a certificate of attendance?

After verifying your attendance at the session, your account will be approved. To print a certificate, log in. Scroll down the Training column and click on Live Training. On the next screen, click on Print Certificate.

12. How will my parish or school know that I've attended a VIRTUS session?

When you register online, make sure to note all parishes, schools or diocesan organizations where you work or volunteer. After you attend a session, your name will appear on a list of approved VIRTUS attendees.

13. Can I take the training online?

Although the online training is approved by the Diocese of Scranton, it should be reserved for exceptional circumstances. Every effort should be made to attend a live training session. In that way, questions can be answered and participants can benefit from the discussion.

14. Do I need to take the training more than once?

The Diocese of Scranton requires one initial training session. Some individuals are required to read the monthly email bulletins as continuing education. Refer to Question #15.

15. After I attend a VIRTUS session, what further training is required?

If you are a member of the clergy, employee or volunteer that works in religious education or youth ministry, you will be required to read monthly email bulletins. The short bulletins contain current information on the topic of child protection. There is one question that must be completed successfully to be noted as having completed the training.

Anyone may read featured articles at www.virtus.org at any time. You don't even have to log in.

16. If I am assigned the monthly online training bulletin, how do I know when the next bulletin is available to read?

You should receive an email from system@virtus.org sent to the address you provided when registering online.

17. How do I access my monthly online training bulletins at www.virtus.org ?

Log on to www.virtus.org then click on the "My Training" tab at the top of the page. Your current bulletin is located there. You will also see a box on the right hand side of the "My Training" page that says "Training Bulletin Report". This tells you how many online training bulletins you currently need to complete. If you have past bulletins to complete, click on the text "Click here to see your complete report" to see a listing. You access each bulletin by clicking on the title.

18. How much does the training cost?

There is no charge to attend the program.

19. Whom should I contact if I have any additional questions, comments or concerns?

Please contact the diocesan Safe Environment Coordinator at 570-207-1453.

Mandated Reporting of Child Abuse – Policy and Procedures

It is the policy of the Diocese of Scranton to adhere to all civil and state regulations regarding the reporting of any allegation of abuse of a minor. The child abuse reporting mandate is imposed on any individual who comes into contact with children in the course of his or her work or professional practice. That includes:

Individuals both paid and volunteer to whom children are “under the care, supervision, guidance or training of the (mandated reporter) or of an agency, institution, organization or other entity with whom that person is affiliated.”

When to Report:

A mandated reporter need not make a first-hand observation of the suspected child abuse victim. Second-hand reports of abuse must be reported to the proper authorities if the mandated reporter has “reasonable cause to suspect” that child abuse has occurred.

The reporting mandate is restricted to those children with whom the mandated reporter comes into contact through work or through the institution with which the reporter is associated.

The mandate to report applies to all suspected child abuse, not just abuse that has been perpetrated by Church personnel.

What is a “reasonable cause to suspect”?

Neither the Child Protective Services Law nor the Regulations of the PA Department of Human Services offer a definition of “reasonable cause to suspect” child abuse. There are a multitude of facts and circumstances that will vary with each situation but the declared purpose of the CPSL is to encourage prompt and complete reporting so as to assure the well-being of children. When you suspect a child is in danger, it is more prudent to err on the side of making the report and then depending on the professionals to determine what has actually transpired.

REPORTING PROCEDURES

1. Church personnel (employees and volunteers) should make the required reports whenever they have any cause to suspect that child abuse has occurred.
2. Those who serve in staff/volunteer positions interacting with children in any Church-related institution are obligated to immediately make a report to the proper civil authorities. Then notify the person in charge.
3. The law requires that mandated reporters identify themselves and where they can be reached. If clarification is needed, the caseworker will contact you.

4. Reports of child abuse are to be made immediately to the 24-hour Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-932-0313 or electronically at <https://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home>
5. A written report (official form to be used – CY47) must be sent to the county child protective services office within 48 hours of the phone call. No further action is required if the report is made electronically.
6. Fill out the form as completely as you are able. You do not need to have all of the information requested for the form. Each county has its own address.

Diocese of Scranton
Safe Environment Policy
Mandated Reporter Training - Policy and Procedures

In 2014/2015 the state of Pennsylvania enacted new legislation revising the procedures for reporting child abuse. Therefore, in order to strengthen the protection of children and to assure that all mandated reporters have accurate information, the Diocese of Scranton has established a policy requiring all identified mandated reporters to complete an approved training course.

The following individuals in the Diocese of Scranton are expected to complete mandated reporter training:

- Priests and Deacons engaged in active ministry, Parish Life Coordinators, Diaconate Applicants, Seminarians
- Adult staff working in parish offices
- Adult employees and adult volunteers who, on the basis of the individual's role as part of a regularly scheduled program, activity or service, accepts responsibility for a child and has direct contact with children.
(i.e. Directors of Religious Education, Catechists, Youth Ministers, Youth Coaches, Youth Choir Directors)
- School employees (including substitute teachers)
- Employees of a child-care service who have direct contact with children during the course of employment
- Employees of a social service agency who have direct contact with children in the course of employment

The Diocese of Scranton requires all identified mandated reporters complete the online training course sponsored by the University of Pittsburgh or a "Live" training session focusing on the recognition and reporting of child abuse in PA.

The online training is no cost and can be accessed as follows: www.reportabusepa.pitt.edu
Click on "Registration" at the top of the page to create your User Name and Password.

Upon completion, a certificate must be printed and submitted to the parish, school, institution, office or organization where the individual serves as an employee or volunteer.

If the individual has already completed this course or another training course that is approved under the PA ACT 31 or PA ACT 126 training requirements, they must provide documentation to receive credit.

Safe Environment Children's Program

The safety education lessons for children teach them how to recognize and avoid situations that could lead to abuse. It also encourages communication between children and their parents. One lesson is taught each year, preferably in the fall. Please refer to the diocesan website www.dioceseofscranton.or for specific information regarding the current lesson for the year.

Role Descriptions:

Directors of Religious Education: The Director of Religious Education, in collaboration with the Pastor or Parish Life Coordinator, the Diocesan Office for Parish Life/Director for Word, and other clerics and members of the lay faithful, ensures the catechetical formation of adults, young people and children (Canon 776). The Director of Religious Education also promotes and fosters the role of parents in family catechesis and supervises the parish religious education programs according to the policies of the Diocese of Scranton while representing the parish to the community at large (Canon 774, par.2).

As a leader in the catechetical ministry of the parish, the Director of Religious Education is responsible for implementing the curriculum, placing and evaluating catechists, encouraging catechist faith growth, managing resources and administering operational procedures.

Catechists: The catechist works with the Director of Religious Education and Pastor to achieve the goals of the religious education program and is directly responsible to the Director of Religious Education. The catechist's responsibility is to model the teachings of the Catholic Church and to help all students learn subject matter and skills that will aid in their spiritual, moral, intellectual, physical and emotional development. Catechists must agree to abide by all policies of the Diocese of Scranton, obtain appropriate background checks, be VIRTUS certified, sign the Code of Pastoral Conduct and complete training on the mandated reporting of child abuse.

Volunteers/Aides: All volunteers must cooperate with the Director of Religious Education in providing a positive educational climate for each student. Volunteers are directly accountable to the Director of Religious Education. Volunteers must agree to abide by all policies of the Diocese of Scranton, obtain appropriate background checks, be VIRTUS certified, sign the Code of Pastoral Conduct and complete training on the mandated reporting of child abuse.

Volunteers under the age of 18 should sign the Youth Code of Conduct. They are not required to be background checked or attend training.

Parents: Parents of students in parish religious education programs serve as both the primary educators as well as faith formation leaders for their children. Parents are expected to participate actively in the life of the parish by attending Mass, contributing financial support to the parish appropriate to their resources and when able, to volunteer to assist with parish activities that aid in community growth.

Safety of Parish Religious Education Classes/ Youth Ministry Programs Policy and Procedures

Classroom Space:

1. Building needs to be safe, secure and well maintained.

Considerations – Is there a single point of entry? Is there a process for clearly identifying guests, staff and students prior to allowing access to the building? Are safety and security protocols discussed with catechists and volunteers at the beginning of the new religious education year?

2. Arrangements need to be made for students with physical disabilities.

Considerations – Does facility have ramps, handrails? Is the restroom handicapped accessible? Is there a First Aid Kit on site?

3. Classroom areas must have escape plans (exit signs).

Considerations – Do you have an emergency plan? Are there adequate numbers of exits to ensure quick evacuation? Do catechists and students know where all exits are located? Do exit doors open from the inside without the use of a key?

4. Director of Religious Education must have access to all classes at all times.

Considerations – Does DRE visit each class at least once each session? Are classroom doors locked whenever class is in session?

5. Drop off/pick up policies need to be in place.

Considerations – Are class times made known and parents aware of times when all doors to facility will be closed and locked? Is there a student roster for checking students in and out? Are parents aware of cancellation policies? Is there a procedure if a student needs to be dismissed early?

**Diocese of Scranton
Safe Environment Program
Overnight Trips/Chaperones
Policy and Procedures**

As a resource for schools and parish groups planning overnight activities, please adhere to the following policy and procedures. Note that the requirements for supervision are the minimal acceptable numbers. Remember to allow adequate planning time when scheduling an overnight activity. Steps should be taken during the planning phase to prevent injury and exposure to liability.

1. In advance of the trip, the Leader should identify any potential risks and determine what actions may be necessary. Issues to consider:
 - What security measures are in place? Will any additional measures be needed?
 - What is the distance to the nearest medical facility and what services are available there?
 - Are language barriers a potential issue?
 - Are there specific customs or standards that may apply?
2. Confirm that facilities are adequate to house all participants in one location, including all adult chaperones.
3. Create a plan of action to assure you can respond to an emergency.
4. Determine if the participants must have specific documents in their possession for the trip. If so, how and when will this be conveyed to the participants allowing for the appropriate amount of time needed to obtain documents.
5. Provide a detailed description of the trip and specific required documents to parents/guardians before participants register. Include the following information:
 - Type of activities
 - All costs
 - Departure and arrival dates and times
 - All modes of transportation to be used
 - Information on accommodations
 - Names of chaperones
 - Emergency contact information
6. Determine if any additional insurance coverage will be needed. All participants should check with their health care insurer to verify their carrier will cover them. If health insurance issues are a concern, arrangements should be made to acquire adequate health insurance for the trip.
7. Arrange a mandatory meeting with all participants and parents/guardians to fully explain the details of the trip. Provide and review written behavior standards and require participants to sign an acknowledgment of their understanding. Discuss expected cell phone and texting guidelines between chaperones and participants.

8. Chaperone Selection:

- All chaperones must be at least 21 years of age and approved by the Pastor/PLC. Assistants ranging in age from 18 - 20 are permitted to attend but should not serve as a primary supervisor. Individuals under the age of 18 are not permitted to serve in a supervisory capacity.
- The initial 10 or fewer minors need to be chaperoned by no less than 2 adults. For each additional 1 to 5 minors, an additional adult needs to be added. The proportion of male to female chaperones should reflect the same proportion of minor participants.
- All chaperones must have background clearances, attend the VIRTUS *Protecting God's Children for Adults* training program and sign the Code of Pastoral Conduct.
- The trip leader is responsible for ensuring that all chaperones have met the stated requirements and have completed all paperwork prior to the trip. Following the trip, the paperwork should be kept on file at the school or parish.

Chaperone Behavioral Standards – Policy and Procedures

- **No one-on-one contact:** One-on-one contact between adults and minors is not permitted except in full view of other adults and minors.
- **Separate Accommodations:** No adult is to be housed in the same room as a minor other than a parent/guardian and their own child. When separate shower and bath facilities are not available, separate times for males and females and adults and minors should be scheduled.
- **Respect for Privacy:** All adults must respect the privacy of minors in situations such as changing clothes and bathing, intruding only to the extent that health and safety require. Adults must protect their privacy in similar situations.
- **Cameras, Imaging and Digital Devices:** It is inappropriate to use any device capable of recording or transmitting visual images in showers, restrooms or other areas where privacy is expected by participants.
- **Hazing and Bullying Prohibited:** Physical hazing and verbal, physical or other bullying is prohibited.
- **Appropriate Attire:** Proper clothing for activities is required. Revealing or immodest clothing is not appropriate.
- **Recognize, Resist, and Report:** Any improper or unsafe conduct observed involving any participant should immediately be reported to the trip Leader.
- **Support Objectives and Guidelines:** Chaperones should be familiar with and adhere to the objectives and guidelines of the sponsoring program.
- **Uphold Authority of Leaders:** Chaperones need to uphold the authority of those responsible for leadership of the program or activity and assist them in every way possible to promote full participation.

- **Active Supervision and Monitoring of Minors:** Keep track of minors entrusted to their care on a day-to-day basis:
 - Make sure minors are awake on time
 - Review daily itinerary
 - Account for all minors on buses or at any time transportation is used
 - Make sure all minors are in their room at curfew

- **Awareness of Emergency Plans:** Be aware of and adhere to emergency plans and evacuation routes at the facilities being used.

- **Retain Paperwork:** Keep emergency medical forms and releases for minors assigned to them.

- **Chaperone to Carry a Cell Phone:** Each chaperone should be encouraged to carry a cell phone and have the group leader's cell phone number readily accessible.

- **Cell Phone/Texting Guidelines:** Cell phone/texting contact between Chaperones and minors should be for supervisory, instructional and emergency purposes only. Care should be taken to maintain professionalism and appropriate boundaries in all communications.

- **Minors' Use of Internet/Cell Phones:** Minors' use of internet/cell phones during youth events/trips should be limited.

- **Separation of Genders in Sleeping Areas:** Chaperones are expected to maintain the separation of genders in youth sleeping rooms. Check sleeping rooms periodically after curfew. If a chaperone must enter youth sleeping rooms, a second chaperone must be present. Chaperones need to be of the same gender as the youth in the room being checked.

- **Night Security:** It is recommended that contracting for security to walk the halls at night be considered. Otherwise, it is recommended that at least two chaperones at a time check the halls in rotating shifts throughout the night.

- **Use of Alcohol and Controlled Substances:** Chaperones will not use, possess or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs at any time while volunteering.

- **Tobacco Products:** Chaperones will not use tobacco products in the presence of children and/or youth.

Diocese of Scranton
Safe Environment Program
Boy and Girl Scout Troops – Policy and Procedures

1. Scout Troops *Chartered* through the Host Parish
 - Adult leaders of Boy or Girl Scout Troops *chartered* through the parish will be required to have criminal history, child abuse history certifications and if applicable, FBI fingerprinting. As per current diocesan policy, clearances will be renewed every 60 months. Verification of clearances completed within the previous four years thru the local Scout Council will be acceptable. The documentation should include a signature of the individual who can verify the information.
 - Adult leaders will be expected to attend the VIRTUS *Protecting God's Children for Adults* child abuse prevention training implemented through the diocese
 - Adult leaders will be expected to complete training on the mandated reporting of child abuse. Documentation should include a certificate of participation or a signature of the individual who can verify the information.
 - Adult leaders will sign and abide by the Code of Pastoral Conduct.

2. Scout Troops utilizing the Host Parish as a meeting place
 - Adult leaders of Boy or Girl Scout Troops utilizing a host parish for a meeting place will be expected to provide verification of background clearances completed thru the local Scout Council. The documentation should include a signature of the individual who can verify the information.
 - Adult leaders will be expected to provide verification of Youth Protection training sponsored thru the local Scout Council. The documentation should include a signature of the individual who can verify the information.

Diocese of Scranton
Safe Environment Program
Megan's Law Policy and Procedures

Background:

Sexually based crimes strike at the very core of the human spirit. Sexual violence leaves behind scarred victims, shattered lives, disrupted families and concerned communities. In response to dealing with the offenders of sexually based crimes, the Federal Government implemented four Federal Acts. From 1994 to 2006, each Act implemented was named after the victims of violent or sexual assaults. These victims were: Adam Walsh, Jacob Wetterling, Pam Lychner and Megan Kanka. In brief, these federal statutes require states to establish registration programs so local law enforcement will know the whereabouts of sexual offenders living in the community.

In Pennsylvania, on October 21, 1995, Governor Tom Ridge signed into law Act 24 of 1995, commonly referred to as Megan's Law, which became effective on April 21, 1996. In 2004, Governor Ed Rendell signed into law Senate Bill No. 92 which required all registered sexual offenders to be available to the public through the Internet. On December 20, 2011, Governor Tom Corbett signed into law Senate Bill No. 1183, also known as the "Adam Walsh Bill", which brought the Commonwealth into compliance with The Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act, and ensured that Pennsylvania joined the coordinated and comprehensive national sexual offender registry.

Pennsylvania's Megan's Law requires the State Police to create and maintain a registry of sexually violent offenders or Sexually Violent Predators/Sexually Violent Delinquent Children who are homeless/transient, live, work, or attend school in their community through a website: www.pameganslaw.state.pa.us.

Policy:

The Diocese of Scranton is committed to the protection of children and young people through compliance with the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* and through the creation of safe environments within our parishes, schools and other Diocesan institutions.

The Diocese of Scranton recognizes that, in general, as conditions of release from prison are arranged for a person convicted of a sexually based crime, certain restrictions may be imposed which limits where parolees may be employed, volunteer, or be in settings with minors, such as in a parish or school setting. To this end, however, no person who is registered under Megan's Law, shall be denied his or her right of access to the sacramental life of the Church and from attendance at Mass. Any person guilty of sexual misconduct with a minor may not have any paid or volunteer ministerial assignment with the Diocese of Scranton.

Procedures:

- Should a parishioner or an employee (paid or volunteer) become aware of the presence of a person registered under Megan's Law on parish or school property or otherwise engaging in parish/school activities, they must immediately notify the Pastor/Principal so that proper action can be taken.

- The Pastor/Principal is to ensure that those registered under Megan’s Law with the PA State Police are not restricted from accessibility to the sacramental life of the Church and from attendance at Mass.
- Upon being notified of a registered Megan’s Law offender (either by another party or by the registered offender him or herself), the Pastor is to immediately consult with the Vicar General so that appropriate steps are taken to address the matter. The Principal would first consult with the Superintendent.
- Arrangements will be made for the Pastor/Principal to meet with the registered person to ascertain the conditions of his or her parole or probation and the duration of the sentence (i.e., 15 years, 25 years or lifetime registration); and to explain that access to parish/school activities will be limited.
- The person registered on the Megan’s Law website will be permitted to attend Mass and to participate in the sacramental life of the Church, but the registered person will not be permitted to attend other events at the parish/school or events sponsored by the parish/school where children are present. They will not be permitted to volunteer for parish/school activities (e.g., parish picnic, CCD teacher, homeroom parent, trip chaperone, etc.)
- Based on the conditions of parole or probation and any additional, appropriate limitations, the Pastor/Principal will, in consultation with the Vicar General/Superintendent, prepare a “Letter of Agreement” (See Appendix A) that will be approved by the Bishop and then presented to the registered person for his or her signature.
- All persons who are registered under Megan’s Law and who need to access parish/school property for any reason, including enrolling their child/children in the parish CCD program, day care center, sports program, youth group, Boy Scouts, etc., must first meet with the Pastor/Principal and have a signed Letter of Agreement on file with the parish/school.
- A copy of the Letter of Agreement will be given to the person registered under Megan’s Law; the original will be kept in the parish/school office in a secure file accessible only by the Pastor/Principal and his designee, and a copy will be sent to the Vicar General for placement into a secure file in the Diocesan vault accessible only by the Bishop, the Vicar General and the Chancellor.
- The Pastor/Principal shall inform only appropriate persons within the parish/school of the parameters of the Letter of Agreement and how they pertain to the individual registered as Megan’s Law offender and his or her family.
- There may be rare instances, when for the welfare and protection of a parish/school community, it might be necessary for the parish/school to seek a temporary restraining order or permanent injunction via the proper court process against a particular registered individual. Such remedies can only be considered after consultation with the Diocesan Solicitor and Vicar General, and with the consent of the Bishop.

Letter of Agreement

We, at _____ Parish/School are a community of believers committed to the Gospel and recognize fully that we are all children of God. We welcome you to our parish. Yet, with deep compassion for you and with knowledge of the seriousness of your required registration on the Megan’s Law website, your participation in parish/school activities will be limited to ensure the safety of children and youth in our parish/school community.

We must request that you comply with the following directives and commit to faithfully adhering to them if you desire to be permitted to participate in our parish/school:

1. As a registered sex offender you may not hold any position at the parish/school which puts you in contact with children other than your own.
2. You may not participate in any organization on parish/school property that would involve the participation of children or young persons.
3. Your appearance on parish/school property is limited to attending Mass, receiving the sacraments, participation in limited adult education/formation classes where no children are present.
4. You are not permitted to attend any parish/school social events unless arrangements are made prior to the event with the Pastor/Principal whereby an adult ‘shadow’ would accompany you at all times to the event. A ‘shadow’ is an adult person who has been fully cleared by the Pastor/Principal and the Diocese of Scranton and who is qualified as an individual who is aware of your registration and commits, in writing, to be within your shadow at all times.
5. If anyone in authority questions your permitted presence on parish/school grounds, you may show but not give a copy of this letter to them. If anyone not in authority, such as another parishioner or adult, questions your presence on the parish grounds, please refer to them to me or to the Vicar General at 570-207-2269 to confirm your permission to be on parish property.

It is recognized that these measures may seem harsh or unfair, however in accordance with the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, which was promulgated by the Bishops of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and in compliance with the Diocese of Scranton Policy for the Response to Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors, we must undertake these measures to protect our children. Please be assured of our prayerful support as you walk this difficult personal path, seeking reconciliation and healing.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor/Principal

I have received, read, understand and commit to follow the conditions set forth in this letter

Signature

Date

**Diocese of Scranton
Safe Environment Program
Diocesan Speaker – Policy and Procedures**

Rationale

- Canon Law requires the Diocesan Bishop to defend the integrity and unity of the Faith.
- When a speaker is provided with a forum in our parishes, schools or other institutions, the faithful have a right to expect that what they hear will be consistent with the teachings of the Church, and with the pastoral direction of the Diocese of Scranton.
- Instituting a speaker policy is not censorship, rather implementing consistent policies and procedures allows the Diocese to avoid difficult or embarrassing situations, such as cancelling a speaker, and ensures that the Bishop exercises his canonical authority.

Premise

- Speakers who are being considered to give a presentation on Faith and Morals must be approved by the Diocesan Bishop *before* an invitation is extended.
- Diocesan Parishes, Schools, Institutions and Offices, and Catholic Organizations within the Diocese cannot promote or sponsor a speaker unless he or she is approved by the Bishop.

Speakers to Which This Policy Applies

- Any speaker under consideration to give a presentation on matters of Faith and Morals who does not fall in the exempt category below

Speakers Who Are Exempt from Seeking Approval

- Cardinals of the Roman Catholic Church, by virtue of their office
- Bishops in communion with the Holy See
- Priests and Deacons of the Diocese of Scranton who are in good standing
- Members of religious communities (whether priests, deacons, brothers or sisters) officially established in or serving in the Diocese
- Staff of diocesan parishes, schools and institutions, including:
 - Parish Staff Members (paid or volunteer)
 - Catechists
 - Catholic School Administrators and Teachers

General Policy

- Catholic clergy and laity who have the responsibility of engaging speakers for spiritual and educational programs in parishes and other groups throughout the Diocese are urged to be vigilant that these

speakers communicate the authentic teaching of the Catholic Church and foster genuine spiritual growth in the Catholic faith.

- Before anyone is scheduled as a speaker, it must be clear that the individual enjoys the endorsement of his/her current Bishop. In the case of a religious, the individual must also have the endorsement of his/her current proper religious order.
- All non-exempt speakers must present certification from their home diocese that they are in compliance with their diocese's policies for safe environments for children and young people. Specifically, they must present proof that a criminal record check was completed by their diocese and that they have attended a workshop on preventing child abuse. This may be submitted either on letterhead or in the form of a certificate.
- Only after the Bishop of Scranton has given the necessary approval, may the event(s) be scheduled and publicly advertised.
- *The Catholic Light* will not accept ads for or requests to publicize programs regarding spiritual talks, programs or services unless the request is accompanied by the letter of approval from the Bishop.

Procedures

- Before an invitation is extended to a speaker, a request must be submitted to the Office of the Chancellor. While preliminary contacts with a proposed speaker are often made prior to extending a formal invitation, it is expected that approval from the Bishop is secured in advance of making any arrangement with a proposed speaker.
- Information that needs to be secured includes:
 1. Speaker's name and topic(s). It should attest to the speaker's fidelity to the Magisterium, and the conformity of the topic to the pastoral direction of the Diocese.
 2. In the case of a lay person, a Letter of Support from the speaker's Bishop establishing that he/she is a Catholic in good standing.
 3. In the case of a cleric or religious from outside the Diocese of Scranton, a Letter of Good Standing from the speaker's Ordinary or proper religious superior attesting that the speaker is a cleric or religious in good standing.
 4. Proof that a criminal history background check was completed by the speaker's diocese and that the speaker has attended a workshop on preventing child abuse. This may be submitted either on letterhead or in the form of a certificate.
- The information will be reviewed via an internal diocesan process. If information is missing or if there are any questions, the individual making the request will be contacted. Likewise, when a decision is reached (approved or denied), the individual making the request will be notified.
- Questions regarding this policy are to be directed to the Office of the Chancellor at (570) 207-2216.

Approved June 2013