



Office for Protection of Children and Young People

DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH
External Affairs Secretariat

www.diopitt.org

SAINT PAUL SEMINARY
2900 NOBLESTOWN ROAD
PITTSBURGH, PA 15205
(412) 456-5633 FAX (412) 456-3022
e-mail: phaney@diopitt.org

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Dear Parent/Guardian:

In the wake of the recent Pennsylvania Grand Jury report it is important to reassure you that we as the Church are diligent in doing everything we can to provide safety and protection for those most vulnerable among us. Our Catholic faith teaches us that every person deserves to be treated with dignity and respect and can expect to be protected from harm. Our hearts go out to the victims of child sexual abuse, especially those who were harmed by someone representing the Church. While over 90 percent of these incidents of abuse occurred before 1990, our focus remains on supporting the continued well-being of victims and working hard to ensure that our churches, schools and institutions are places where people of all ages, and especially children, are kept safe from harm.

To this end, I want to outline the steps we take for Child Protection in our Faith Formation programs to ensure that they are safe environments for your children. The following requirements are in place for all clergy, employees and volunteers in the Diocese of Pittsburgh:

1. Completion of the detailed diocesan database application
2. PA Child Abuse History Certification
3. PA State Police Criminal Record Certification
4. FBI Fingerprint (Federal Criminal Record) Certification (or for volunteers who have lived in PA for at least 10 consecutive years and have not committed any of the disqualifying crimes, a signed Volunteers Disclosure Statement)
5. Take a 3 hour Protecting God's Children Workshop detailing a plan to protect children
6. Read and sign the latest Code of Pastoral Conduct
7. Read and sign the Reporting of Child Abuse and the Child Protective Services Law of PA
8. Take a 3 hour Mandated Reporter Training course

We also take the opportunity every catechetical year to teach children their role in remaining safe. All children, grades K-8, receive specific, age-appropriate lessons on personal safety as part of the Catholic Vision of Love Program.

It is the purpose of our Safe Environment Policy to take reasonable measures to assure that Church Personnel comply with all required certifications and background checks to permit the necessary assessment of suitability for contact with children with the purpose of providing a safe environment for children (Policy: Safe Environments for Children, page 2).

Please know that we work hard to ensure that our parishes and schools are safe environments for your children. The staffs of our parishes and schools are diligent in enforcing the Safe Environment policies of the Diocese of Pittsburgh and are dedicated to protecting from harm the children under their care. To learn more about the policies and procedures in place to provide for the well-being of your children, visit www.diopitt.org/protect.

Sincerely Yours in Christ,
Phyllis Haney