

St. Thomas the Apostle Parish  
Implementation Plan  
Safe Environment Policy for the Protection of Children

**Updated August 2018**

**I Introduction**

Parish Mission Statement: *We, the parishioners of St. Thomas the Apostle strives to live like J.E.S.U.S. Joyful Evangelizing Stewards United in the Spirit.*

**II Code of Pastoral Conduct**

Our parish, in response to the National Catholic Bishops and our Bishop Gerald Barnes, maintains and supervises the implementation and adherence to the Code of Pastoral Conduct, as mandated by the Diocese of San Bernardino and supported by our pastor.

**III Training**

**A. Target Groups**

At St. Thomas the Apostle, the following groups will continue to participate in diocesan specified training: Youth Ministry, Youth Confirmation, Middle School Catechesis, Children's Catechesis (Spanish and English), RCIA- adapted for children, including Home School based programs, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts.

The volunteers within these ministries:

- 1) Must maintain an 'approved' status from ScreenOne background check for
- 2) Must complete a one time certificate course for State Mandated Reporting with an annual procedural review. School renews every 3 years, parish renews every 5 years.
- 3) Must attend Diocesan Pastoral Code workshop with annual policy review.
- 4) Must update annually their Volunteer Questionnaire and Emergency Information Form. These forms will be maintained within their ministry's department and a copy provided annually to the Parish Administrator.

**B. Training Curriculum**

**1. Adults**

The parish website will continue to include hyper-links to the diocesan website and Safe Environment Policy Information. This will provide all adults with an easy access to learn about the Safe Environment Policies of our diocese and keep updated.

**2. Children**

Annually the children's catechesis departments, grades Kindergarten through 5 in both Spanish and English, will present a specialized class covering the information of the Safe Environment Policy for the Protection of Children. Curriculum utilized will be diocesan approved. A catechist in-service on presenting the lesson plan with all its components will be held prior to this presentation. Those registered children who are absent during this annual presentation will be provided written materials for the parent(s) and child(ren) to cover at home. A signature that the materials were received and covered will be required and kept on file for those parents taking this resource home.

### **3. Minors**

Annually the youth catechesis department, grades 6-12, will present a specialized class covering the information of the Safe Environment Policy for the Protection of Children. Curriculum utilized will be diocesan approved. A catechist in-service on presenting the lesson plan with all its components will be held prior to its presentation. Those registered youth who are absent during this annual presentation will be provided written materials for the parent(s) and youth to cover at home. A signature that the materials were received and covered will be required and kept on file for those parents taking this resource home.

## **C. Methods**

### **1. Past**

Annually one catechetical class, Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, taught the safe environment curriculum provided by the diocese. This was accomplished in both Spanish and English.

### **2. Current**

\*Annually two catechetical classes, Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, are taught the safe environment curriculum provided by the diocese. This is accomplished in both Spanish and English. \*Attendance is verified and kept on file. \*The parents of the students not in attendance are provided the information to review with their children at home.

### **3. Future**

\*Annually two catechetical classes, Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, will be taught the Diocesan provided safe environment curriculum. This is accomplished in both Spanish and English. \*Attendance is verified and maintained. \*The parents of the students not in attendance are provided the information to review with their children at home.

The parents receiving this take-home resource material will sign a form acknowledging the acceptance and use of materials. This form will be kept on file by the catechetical department coordinator issuing the form.

## **D. Resources**

Diocesan printed booklet resources are available in the parish office for all staff, volunteers and any interested parishioners. Resources include: The Safe Environment Policy for the Protection of Children and The Diocesan Code of Pastoral Conduct. These resources are also available via hyper-links on our parish website to better facilitate their distribution to all interested persons. This ensures that a person does not need to drive to the parish office to obtain these resources.

Other resources available through the Office of Charter Initiatives include:

**Books:**

“Taking Back Our Lives” - Patti Sherlock, Reflections from an Abuse Survivor

“Raising Careful Confident Kids in a Crazy World” - Paula Statman, MSW

“How to Raise Emotionally Healthy Children” - Gerald Newmark, PhD

**Websites:**

St. Thomas the Apostle: [www.st-thomas-riverside.com](http://www.st-thomas-riverside.com)

Diocese of San Bernardino: [www.sbdioocese.org](http://www.sbdioocese.org)

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops: [www.USCCB.org](http://www.USCCB.org)

National Catholic Education Association: [www.ncea.org](http://www.ncea.org)

Riverside County Child Protective Services:

<http://dpss.co.riverside.ca.us/dpss/childrenservices1>

**E. Documentation****On Parish Site**

**Staff:** All documentation of adherence to The Diocesan Safe Environment Policy will be maintained at the parish office by the Parish Administrator designated by the pastor. This includes fingerprinting clearance, completion of Safe Environment Training and certification in State Mandated Reporter for each staff member.

**School:** The principal of St. Thomas the Apostle School, as designated by the pastor, will maintain all Safe Environment documents at the school site.

**Volunteers:** All documentation for adherence to the Diocesan Safe Environment Policy will be maintained at the parish office by each catechetical department coordinator. A copy will also be provided to the Parish Administrator. This includes fingerprinting clearance, completion of Safe Environment Training. A certification for State Mandated Reporter is helpful. At the start of each fiscal year, volunteers will complete the Volunteer Questionnaire Form. Each department coordinator will provide a copy of this form for each volunteer to the Parish Administrator. This procedure will be updated as new volunteers provide their service throughout the year. In-service and class sign-in sheets are approved as evidence of compliance for the parish plan and a copy will be provided to the Parish Administrator as they occur.

**Diocesan - April 15<sup>th</sup> Report:**

Each Catechetical Department coordinators will complete the diocesan form: Report for USCCB Safe Environment Self Audit. This report will include the date(s) of the Safe Environment Instruction for children. It will also include the number of participants attending the class and the number of registered children for each department. All information will be provided annually to the Parish Administrator before the end of March. The Parish Administrator will compile the data to complete the report and send it to the Diocesan Catechetical Office by April 15<sup>th</sup>.

**IV Background Checks**

The Diocese of San Bernardino requires that St. Thomas the Apostle Parish maintain current Live-scan fingerprints and background checks of all clergy, staff,

and independent contractors. ScreeningOne background checks will be done for all volunteers who have contact with minors. All persons, 18 years of age or older, who supervise or assist when minors are present must have a current satisfactory Live-scan or ScreeningOne background check on file with the parish and diocesan office. No new staff member or volunteer may begin their work without completing this requirement. Once diocesan approval is received, the new staff member or volunteer may begin to participate in their activity of choice.

It is currently the policy and practice of our parish to reimburse the expense of the Live-scan process or cover the cost of ScreeningOne background check. This is to ensure that financial limitations are not a reason for non-compliance with this mandated requirement.

## **V Supervision of Minors**

- Chaperone ratio for Kindergarten will be one adult to every five children.
- Elementary age children through age 18 will be at a ratio of ten to one adult. Effort will be made to provide both male and female chaperones.
- Annual insurance for students will be purchased per catechetical department and paid for by the parish.
- All volunteers are to utilize the 'buddy system'; that is having a minimum of two volunteers at a time so that no volunteer is working alone.
- Supervisory coverage is required at parking lots at drop-off and pick-up times.
- Sign-in sheets or roll/attendance sheets are mandatory for all gatherings. These forms are also used in case of a natural disaster.
- Direct line of vision to group is required. Example: No windowless doors will be closed to insure that all gatherings are in plain view.
- No nursery or child care is to be provided at the parish. Children not enrolled in a program are not allowed to participate without parental supervision.
- No overnight events are allowed unless previously approved by the pastor. Confirmation Retreat weekends are allowed annually. Retreats must meet all the parish's and diocesan supervisory requirements.
- Parent permission slips and insurance information will be collected for each child prior to the start of each educational year, or special event, and a file will be maintained by each catechetical department. A copy of these documents will be kept in each classroom.
- No volunteer or staff member may drive/transport a minor. Transportation is the responsibility of the parent. The only exception occurs when a chartered bus is hired. This chartered bus company must have a current Liability of Insurance Certificate on file with the parish before it may be utilized.

## **VI Parish Plan Committee**

Our committee consists of the following staff personnel who work in concert with our Pastor, Fr. Frank Dicristina.

Arcelia Maldonado-Lopez	Parish Administrator
Rebecca Barragan	Parish Communications *Site Supervisor
Graciela Fernandez	Representing Adult Catechesis
Geraldine Delafosse	RCIA-AC
Dana Robles	Children Catechetical Coordinator

Lisa Upattiya	Youth Minister
Marisol Aceves	Children Catechetical Coordinator (Spanish)
Bertha Munoz	Catechetical Department Aid
Maria Cordeiro	Parish Secretary
Dr. Dian Pizurie	St. Thomas School Principal
Jeanette Morrow	St. Thomas School Vice Principal
Martha Ochoa	St. Thomas School *Site Supervisor

The pastor designated site supervisor for The Parish Implementation of the Safe Environment Policy for the Protection of Children is the Parish Administrator. The site supervisor will maintain the Informational and Audit Preparedness Binders for the parish. The designated school site supervisor is the Principal. The principal will maintain their Informational and Audit Preparedness Binders. All records for clergy, staff, and independent contractors will remain with the Parish Administrator as the head of HR. As stated previously, the Parish Implementation Plan will be on our parish website for all interested parishioners to download and available at the parish office to be reviewed during regular business hours.

**VII Accountability**

Every adult hired to work or volunteer in the Diocese of San Bernardino is equally accountable for implementing diocesan policies and procedures. This includes all staff and volunteers of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish.

To maintain the integrity of The Safe Environment Policy for the Protection of Children, it is necessary to report violations of this policy, The Parish Implementation Plan, The Code of Pastoral Conduct, other diocesan policies or any applicable laws of the State of California.

**If there is suspected abuse of a minor, report to:**

\*Local law enforcement authorities and to Riverside County Child Protective Services, (800) 442-4918.

\*Diocesan Vicar General or the Diocesan Hotline at (888) 206-9090, if a member of the clergy committed the abuse

**Or**

\*Director of Human Resources, (909) 475-5177, if a church employee or volunteer committed the abuse

**Or**

Superintendent of Schools, (909) 475-5433, if a school educator, employee or volunteer committed the abuse

**Suspected abuse reporting continued:**

**And**

To your pastor or immediate supervisor.

Remember, the content of the report information is confidential in nature. Refrain from repeating the information to others not listed above.

**VIII Approval**

This Parish Implementation Plan has been developed and approved by the Diocese of San Bernardino, our pastor, Fr. Frank Dicristina, and parish staff personnel:

Arcelia Maldonado-Lopez, Rebecca Barragan, Graciela Fernandez, Geraldine Delafosse, Dana Robles, Lisa Upattiya, Marisol Aceves, Bertha Munoz, and Maria Cordeiro; parish school personnel: Dr. Dian Pizurie, Jeanette Morrow, and Martha Ochoa.

## **IX Distribution**

Our Parish Implementation Plan and The Diocese of San Bernardino Safe Environment Policy for the Protection of Children and The Diocesan Code of Pastoral Conduct will be distributed to the following: all parish staff, ministry coordinators, catechetical volunteers, coordinators of our chartered Boy Scout Troop and Girl Scout Troop; and the current Grand Knight of the chartered Knights of Columbus. Copies of these plans and policies will also be available in a binder at the parish office, and may be reviewed by any interested parishioner. This informational binder will be announced in the parish bulletin a least one time each year.

The Code of Pastoral Conduct and The Parish Implementation Plan information will also be provided on our parish website: [www.st-thomas-riverside.com](http://www.st-thomas-riverside.com).

The Parish Implementation Plan will be reviewed by the Pastor and Parish Plan Committee at the close of each fiscal year. Any revisions will be updated within the Implementation Plan text.

## **X References**

Diocese of San Bernardino Policies:

Code of Pastoral Conduct

Diocesan Policy Manual Human Resource Section 500.1,

Paragraph: 1000-1006 Harassment

Diocesan Policy Manual Office of Priest Personnel Section 700.1

Paragraph: 26 Residence, Lay Persons Residing in Rectories

Diocesan Policy in Cases of Sexual Misconduct

Diocesan Policy in Cases of Sexual Abuse by Clergy

# **St. Thomas the Apostle Parish, Entity #1364 Safe Environment Policy for the Protection of Children**

# Parish Implementation Plan

## INDIVIDUAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND SIGN-OFF SHEET

I hereby acknowledge that I have received a copy of the St. Thomas the Apostle Parish Implementation Plan.

I understand that these policies are a crucial part of our diocesan and parish commitment to fulfill the terms and requirements of Article 12 of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People.

I agree to abide by these policies as a condition of employment and/or as a condition of my ministry whether paid or voluntary.

I understand that the policies will be reviewed periodically and may be changed with the approval of the Bishop. I understand further that it is my responsibility to address questions or request clarifications about these policies from the Parish Administrator and/or the Coordinator of the Diocesan Charter Initiatives.

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

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Apt/Sp # \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_, CA Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Job or Ministry Title: \_\_\_\_\_

(Check one:)  Clergy  Paid Employee  Volunteer  Parishioner

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