

“A CONTINUATION OF OUR PROMISE TO PROTECT AND OUR PLEDGE TO HEAL”

# Safe Environment Renewal Course



for Parish Communities  
and Personnel

Metropolitan Archeparchy  
of Pittsburgh

Created 2018


# Everyone has a part to play



- ▶ We are here today as a parish family to renew our commitment to ensure that our children and youth are happy and safe in their daily activities.
- ▶ Everyone needs to be alert to warning signs that abuse may be occurring and to be ready if necessary to speak to a person in authority about it.




# Where are we today?

- In 2002 the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops created the “Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People.” This was updated in 2011.
  - In addition to the Charter, the USCCB has established the Office of Child and Youth Protection and the National Review Board.
  - Both organizations aid the USCCB and recommend policies to protect minors.
  - Article 12 of the Charter mandates that all Eparchies maintain “Safe Environment Programs.”
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# Accountability

## The Role of the Review Board

- Diocesan/Eparchial Review Boards were established in every Diocese/Eparchy to help bishops assess allegations of sexual misconduct against minors and evaluate clerics' suitability for ministry.
  - Diocesan/Eparchial policies and procedures are revised and updated to ensure transparency.
  - A majority of the Review Board must be lay persons not in the employ of the Diocese/Eparchy.
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# Audits

- Every Diocese/Eparchy is audited by independent auditors, Stonebridge Partners, for compliance to the Charter.
  - The Archeparchy of Pittsburgh has consistently been in compliance since the first audit in 2003, but we always act upon recommendations on how to do things better!
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# Why are we here?

## Archeparchial Policies for SE Clearance

- To comply with the Charter, the Archeparchy created its Safe Environment Office and a policy in accord with the Charter.
- All priests, deacons, religious, employees, volunteers, etc. must:
  - Accept the Code of Conduct
  - Pass Child Abuse and Criminal Background Clearances
  - Complete SE Training
- **Clearances and training are to be renewed every 5 years by all.**
- These policies are in place to help create the safest environment possible for our youth.



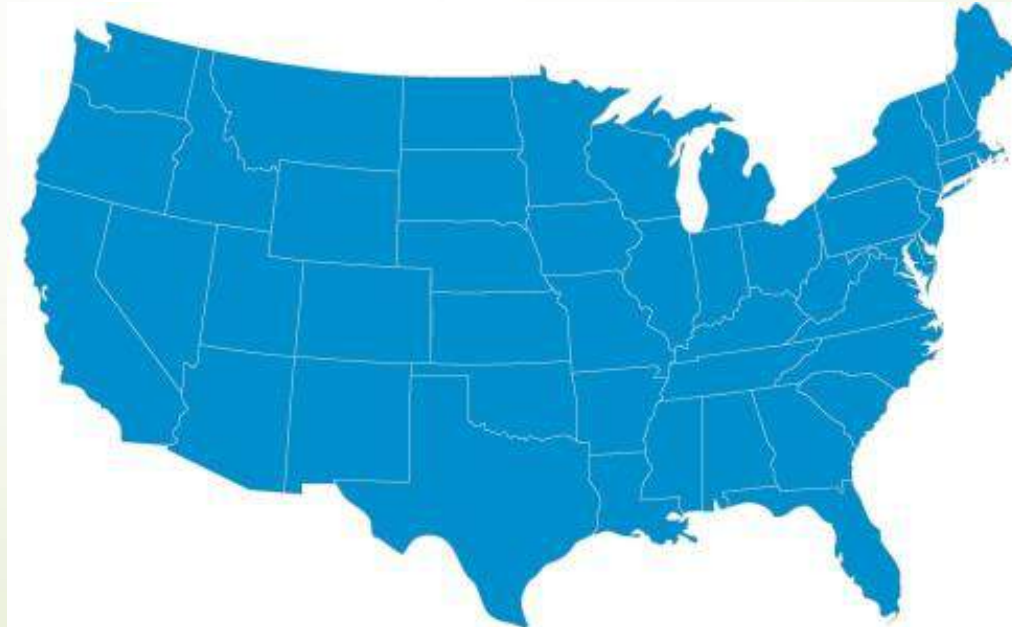
# Renewal of the Code of Conduct

- Our Archeparchy has made clear the standards of conduct for clergy and other persons in positions of trust with regard to children. This is our Code of Conduct.
  - We do not require you to resign the Code of Conduct in retraining, but it is always welcome.
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# Child Abuse & Criminal Background Clearances

- Methods to obtain Child Abuse and Criminal Background Clearances differ from state to state









# Non-Pennsylvania Renewal of Clearances

- ▶ For those *outside of Pennsylvania*, this is a simplified process where a signed authorization permits the Archieparchial Safe Environment Coordinator to obtain the information through a third party vendor, First Advantage.
- ▶ All Safe Environment forms are available on the website of the Archeparchy:  
[www.archpitt.org/safe-environment-program](http://www.archpitt.org/safe-environment-program)



# Renewal of Pennsylvania Criminal Clearances

- For those in Pennsylvania, this is a several step process...
- PA residents must provide an authorization for a criminal background check to be obtained from the State Police.
- This is the Criminal Background Disclosure and Authorization Form.



# Renewal of Pennsylvania Child Abuse Clearances

- A separate process is used to obtain child abuse clearances...
- Your Safe Environment Coordinator will provide a free Authorization Code and instructions for how to log on to the PA Child Welfare Portal.
- Using a computer connected to the Internet, log on to the PA Child Welfare Portal:  
[www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home](http://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home) to fill out the *Child Abuse Clearance* application online.
- For those without a computer, alternative paper-based clearances can be obtained from the PA Department of Human Services.



## Criminal Checks - Residents of a State Less than Ten Years

- Background checks are needed for people moving from state to state.
- *If one has been a resident of another state or country for less than ten years, FBI clearances are necessary.*
- Pennsylvania has engaged a vendor, **Indentogo**, to perform these federal clearances. They perform criminal background checks around the country.
- You must register online, obtain a finger-print appointment, and ultimately provide authorization for this information to be shared with the Archeparchy. The website is: [www.indentogo.com/locations/pennsylvania](http://www.indentogo.com/locations/pennsylvania)
- You will need a Service Code to register online. For employees and clergy, the Service Code is **1KG756**. For volunteers, the code is **1KG6ZJ**.



## What if I have clearances provided by my employer?

- This is assessed on a case-by-case basis by the Safe Environment Office, but generally these clearances are acceptable.
- What if I have clearances from a different Diocese or Eparchy?
- Your SE Office can probably obtain your clearance file from your prior Diocese/Eparchy.

# What is Our Role?


“The Church loves all her children like a loving mother, but cares for all and protects with a special affection those who are smallest and defenseless. This is the duty that Christ himself entrusted to the entire Christian community as a whole. Aware of this, the Church is especially vigilant in protecting children and vulnerable adults.”

-Pope Francis






# Ten Truths about Child Abuse, its Prevention and Healing

1. Sexual molestation is about the victim
  2. No one has the right to have access to children
  3. Common sense is not all that common
  4. Child sexual abuse can be prevented
  5. The residual effects of having been abused can last a lifetime
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# Ten Truths about Child Abuse, its Prevention and Healing

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6. Feeling heard leads toward healing
  7. You cannot always predict who will be an abuser
  8. There are behavioral warning signs of child abusers
  9. People can be taught to identify grooming behavior
  10. Background checks work



# Haunting Facts about Child Abuse in Our Society

- Research estimates 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys will be sexually abused before they turn 18.
  - The abuse of minors can lead to serious psychological problems. According to one study, 80% of 21-year-olds who reported childhood abuse met the criteria for at least one psychological condition.
  - A report of child abuse is made every ten seconds according to [childhelp.org](http://childhelp.org).
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There are four nationally recognized categories of Child Abuse:

- Physical
- Sexual
- Mental
- Neglect

It may be violent or non-violent

It may involve touching or non-touching behavior

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- **Physical** – hitting, shaking, pinching, hair-pulling, biting, choking, throwing, paddling.
  - **Sexual** – any sexual act between an adult and a minor, the showing of pornography.
  - **Mental** – name-calling, telling children they are bad, worthless, or a mistake, withholding affection and support.
  - **Neglect** – failure to supervise a child, failing to provide a child with adequate essential food, clothing, shelter or medical care.


# Child abuse is far reaching


No geographic, ethnic, or  
economic setting is free  
of child abuse  
and of neglect.





# What does research teach us about abusers?

- Can be any person who has care, custody, or control of a child — parent, teacher, coach, babysitter, child care staff, relative, bus driver, parent's boy/girlfriend
  - Child molesters look for jobs or volunteer opportunities that give them access to children
  - 80% of the time the molester is an adult known to the child and is not a stranger
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# Potential abusers often give warning signs

- Prefer the company of children and young people to adults.
- They allow children to engage in activities that their parents would not allow
- They sympathize with a child against legitimate family rules and discipline
- Hang out with youth in youth-oriented places: coffee shops, malls, etc.
- Find ways to spend time alone with a child or youth, especially overnight





# Possible signs that a child is being abused

- Bruises, swellings, marks which are hard to explain
  - Lingering sadness and anxiety
  - Changes in a child's behavior or attitude around someone who formerly was considered a friend
  - Sleep problems or nightmares
  - Withdrawal or self-isolation
  - Poor hygiene, untreated illness or injury
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# Reporting Child Abuse

- If a child shows signs of possible abuse or an adult's actions are suspect, we should immediately communicate our concerns to the person who has authority in the situation.
- If circumstances warrant, church and civil authorities should be notified. All church personnel are mandated to report suspected abuse. No child should have to endure such suffering.



# Reporting Child Abuse

- PA Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline (24 hour):  
**1-800-932-0313**
- Report electronically at the Child Welfare Portal: [www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis](http://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis)
- After making the report to ChildLine, you are required to immediately thereafter notify the person in charge of the institution, school, facility or agency or the designated agent of the person in charge.



# Reporting Child Abuse

Other States Abuse Lines:


**OHIO** - The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services -  
1-855-OH-CHILD (855-642-4453)

**TEXAS** - Department of Family and Protective Services -  
1-800-252-5400

**WEST VIRGINIA** - Department of Health and Human  
Resources -1-800-352-6513

**LOUISIANA** 1-855-4LA-KIDS (1-855-452-5437)

All states' phone lines are toll free and 24 hours a day, 365  
days a year.



**Courtney Miner**, the Victims Assistance Coordinator for the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh, is prepared to give compassionate advice and necessary information to persons who have been abused.

**Courtney** may be reached at  
**724-504-9588**



# SOCIAL NETWORKING




Source:  
kent-teach.com







## Social Networking carries risks for young people along with the benefits

- Safety for young people from predators has always been a concern.
  - Before allowing young people to use any of these sites, sign up and experience the site yourself to decide if it is appropriate for their level of maturity.
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*We can create a safer world  
for our children  
when we work together  
as a Byzantine Catholic  
community.*