

In our continuing efforts to implement national policies and procedures for the protection and safety of our children and of all the faithful entrusted to our care, the following is a summary of diocesan policies promulgated on October 20, 2003.

- I The following individuals must have **Background Checks**:
All background checks **must** be conducted prior to hire.
 - A All clergy, Catholic school principals and teachers, catechetical leaders, catechetical instructors, seminarians, and youth ministers
 - B Those who assist in youth ministry, all volunteers (over the age of 18) in our various ministries that deal with youth
 - C All paid personnel employed by the parish, Catholic school, Church institutions, and diocesan staff
 - D Random ongoing background checks will be performed on all employees and volunteers for whom initial checks are required. Each person so covered will be subject to this background re-check every ten years.
 - E Payment for each ongoing check will be the responsibility of the parish or institution where the person is employed.
- II Pastors, school principals, catechetical leaders, and youth ministers are asked to have each person in their charge for which a background check is required sign a copy of the diocesan release form allowing the Diocese of Ogdensburg or its agent to perform this investigation.
- III Church-sponsored or church-related groups whose ministries could put them in contact with minors must have background checks. The leaders of groups which use church property for activities where they may come in contact with youth must have background checks.
- IV Individuals who have undergone Background Checks by the Church, subsequently leave the Church's employ, and later seek re-employment with the Church, must undergo another Background Check before re-hire.
- V The employer must inform the Safe Environment Coordinator to discuss the hiring of anyone who has a record of a misdemeanor or felony before that individual is hired.
- VI **Code of Conduct – Youth Volunteer/Worker:** (cf. *Pastoral Handbook 107.9*) All volunteers under the age of 18 in the Diocese of Ogdensburg who are involved with minors must read and sign the *Youth Volunteer Code of Conduct*. These signed agreements are to be filed in each parish, school, or ministry where the person volunteers.
- VII **Code of Conduct – Adult Volunteer/Worker:** (cf. *Pastoral Handbook 107.8*) All volunteers over the age of 18 in the Diocese of Ogdensburg who are involved with minors must read and sign the *Adult Volunteer Code of Conduct*. These signed agreements are to be filed in each parish, school, or ministry where the person volunteers.

- VIII **“Protecting God’s Children” (VIRTUS):** A three-hour training session is required of all clergy, seminarians, and religious who work in the Diocese of Ogdensburg, all paid personnel, and anyone who is in direct or limited contact with minors. Continual (monthly) training, either via internet or printed version, is required of all clergy, all youth ministry directors, (paid or volunteer), all catechetical leaders, (paid or volunteer), all Catholic school principals, teachers, and teacher’s aides, all paid personnel who have contact with minors, and all “*Protecting God’s Children*” workshop facilitators.
- IX All school-aged children are to receive **CHILD LURES** training or similar training (such as the *New York State Child Health Safety* program), as part of their public or Catholic school curriculum. *New York State Child Health Safety* curriculum is mandated for all Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Ogdensburg. Special informational sessions are to be scheduled for the parents of all parochial and public school students who receive **CHILD LURES** training. Additional sessions addressing safe environment issues are encouraged in both the Catholic and public schools.
- X It is the responsibility of the pastor of every parish and Catholic school to ensure and record that the above-mentioned policies are followed. Pastors will complete the diocesan *Annual Pastor’s Charter Compliance Report* attesting to compliance. All questions pertaining to diocesan efforts to provide Safe Environments for our children and youth should be directed to the diocesan Safe Environment Coordinator.