



Diocese of Oakland

Safe Environment for Children Project Overview

Background

The *Charter for the Protection of Children and Youth* requires that Diocese/eparchies establish “safe environment” programs. Article 12 of the Charter states:

“Diocese/eparchies will establish “safe environment” programs. They will cooperate with parents, civil authorities, educators, and community organizations to provide education and training for children, youth, parents, ministers, educators, and others about ways to make and maintain a safe environment for children. Dioceses/eparchies will make clear to clergy and members of the community the standards of conduct for clergy and other persons in positions of trust with regard to sexual abuse.”

In addition, Article 13 states:

“Dioceses/eparchies will evaluate the background of all diocesan/eparchial and parish personnel who have regular contact with minors. Specifically, they will utilize the resources of law enforcement and other community agencies.”

Project Components

The following are the four components of the Diocese of Oakland’s Safe Environments for Children Project (SECP).

1. Screening Employees and Volunteers

_____ Livescan fingerprint all school employees and parish employees with “supervisory and/or disciplinary responsibility for children” at the beginning of employment at each site. (School Administrators/Teachers may provide copies of current credentials.) A Background check for all other parish employees must be done. Parishes and/or schools must receive clearance information from the Diocese PRIOR to beginning employment. A Diocesan clearance form must be included in employee personnel files.

_____ Livescan fingerprint all volunteers who meet diocesan criteria for fingerprinting as scheduled by the parish/school per the directives of the Diocese.

_____ Megan's Law screen all volunteers YEARLY.
www.MegansLaw.ca.gov

_____ Complete Megan's Law documentation form and submit to Safe Environment Office. Email a list of screened volunteers which includes volunteer names and addresses or birthdates. THIS IS DUE BY OCTOBER 31 OF EACH CALENDAR YEAR.

_____ In addition, if the screening notifies you that any volunteer is a registered sex offender, please also call Marilyn Marchi (ONLY), SEP Coordinator, and she will give you information for follow up.

2. Training for Employees and Volunteers

Training will be offered for all employees and volunteers both at sites and online. Training is currently offered in English and Spanish.

_____ Training is required at the beginning of employment or volunteer position. Retraining is required every three years per the diocesan calendar. Both must be conducted by a Trainer authorized by the Safe Environment Office.

_____ The Policy of Expectations and sign off sheets will be distributed at on site trainings only. The parish/school site will keep the yellow carbons and forward the originals to the Safe Environment Office.

_____ The Registration Information form will be distributed at the on site trainings, completed by each attendee and returned to the trainer to be sent to the Safe Environment office.

_____ Parish/school sites may choose to have employees/volunteers complete the training component and sign off of Policy of Expectations at the approved Diocesan online training at www.shieldthevulnerable.org.

- > Go to www.shieldthevulnerable.org
- > Fill in registration form (requires email)
- > You will then receive an email with your temporary ID and Password
- > click link in email to take course

3. Curriculum Development

Curriculum will be focused on child safety, with special emphasis on child abuse and its prevention. Each “unit” will contain classroom curriculum, a lesson planning guide and ancillary materials to ensure accessibility and ease of use. The school-based curriculum will be more in-depth and will cover safety issues related to a school setting. The parish-based curriculum will be limited in scope primarily because of time constraints in such programs.

_____ Discuss/Collaborate/Choose specific curriculum from Diocesan approved curriculum choices.

_____ Arrange training dates for Teachers and Catechists in Curriculum. (If needed)

_____ Teach the curriculum to the students by the parish/school deadline of February 28, 2009.

_____ Provide documentation to the Safe Environment Office upon completion of teaching of the classroom by parish/school deadline.

4. Parish-Based Safe Environments for Children Committees

Committees will be established in each parish with the primary goal of assisting the pastor in ensuring safe environments for children.

_____ Select committee members.

_____ Meet at least twice yearly.

_____ Submit a summary of each meeting to the Pastor, the Pastoral Council, the parish School Board and the Diocesan Safe Environment Coordinator, and provide a report to the parish and school through whatever means are appropriate (bulletin, website, newsletter, etc.).

Other requirements:

_____ Have all employees who work directly with children and youth and are mandated reporters sign the Child Abuse Reporting and Acknowledgement form **yearly**. Place in personnel files. (Appendix 4005)

_____ Ensure that all mandated reporters know how to report an allegation of child abuse and that they know where the reporting forms and phone numbers are on your site.

_____ Publicize to parishioners/school families the policies and procedures related to the Charter. (parish bulletins, school bulletins, announcements at Mass/meetings, brochures, posters in the church vestibule, etc)