



Annual Report from the Child Protection Advisory Board July 1, 2014-June 30, 2015

The Archdiocese of Washington's child protection division continues to make strides in making child protection its top priority. It has had a written Child Protection Policy for over 26 years and continues to conduct rigorous background checks on individuals who have substantial contact with children. The archdiocese led the way in child protection by being one of the first to implement a written policy, provide education on child safety and require fingerprinting of employees. Today critical and relevant information regarding the Child Protection Policy and more is available online at www.adw.org.

An Archdiocesan Child Protection Advisory Board of lay experts (including at least one victim-survivor) monitors the archdiocese's outreach and compliance with the Child Protection Policy. In addition, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops audits the Archdiocese of Washington on its compliance with the U.S. Bishops' *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. The auditors, from a third-party independent organization, conduct interviews with archdiocesan staff and review records relating to education, background checks, compliance monitoring, reporting and healing. The archdiocese has been found in full compliance with the audit every year, including this reporting year of 2014-2015.

One of the most vital parts of the Child Protection Policy is accountability. Each year the archdiocesan Director of the Office of Child and Youth Protection compiles a report for the Vicar General to present to the Child Protection Advisory Board. The Child Protection Advisory Board reviews the annual report, recommends modifications if required, then approves and circulates the annual report. This twelfth annual report covers prevention and education efforts, as well as the archdiocese's response to those who have come forward with allegations over the report period. This report once again establishes that the Office of Child and Youth Protection's chief objective is to work with the community to educate and promote child safety.

Education

The Archdiocese of Washington embraces its opportunity to teach those in its communities that all children deserve to be safe and protected in all environments – home, school, religious institutions, and communities. The Archdiocesan Child Protection Policy mandates child abuse awareness and prevention education to all adults who have substantial

contact with children or vulnerable adults, as well as safe environment education for all youth. By raising awareness among adults the archdiocese gives them the knowledge and tools to deal with child abuse issues should they occur; and by educating children on “how to be safe” the archdiocese enhances the ability of children to protect themselves, and encourages an environment that allows them to freely communicate any potential problem.

Adult Education. The program used by the Archdiocese of Washington, *Protecting God’s Children for Adults*, is nationally recognized and was developed by National Catholic Risk Retention Group/Virtus. Twenty-two (22) Virtus-trained facilitators, including several who are bilingual in English and Spanish, led this year’s education sessions. Between July 1, 2014 and June 30, 2015:

- 92 Protecting God’s Children training sessions, including seven in Spanish, were held at various locations throughout the archdiocese.
- 3,768 individuals, including volunteers, new employees and clergy, were trained.

Child Education. The archdiocese, under the direction of the Superintendent of Schools and the Director of Catechesis, continued to provide safe environment education for the children in archdiocesan Catholic schools and parish religious education programs. The Catholic Schools Office and the Office of Catechesis used materials developed by Virtus, the same company that provides the adult education materials. Other educational materials were also available. During the 2014-15 school year:

- 14,120 Catholic school students and 22,088 children in parish religious education programs received safe environment education.

Fingerprinting and Background Checks

The archdiocese recognizes that background checks are a critical element in ensuring the safety of children and helping to protect them from inappropriate actions or behaviors of others. All clergy, employees and volunteers who will have substantial contact with minors while working or volunteering are required to undergo state and federal criminal history record checks before they begin working or volunteering with minors.

Since 2002, fingerprinting has been done through state-of-the art scanning via Live Scan equipment at three archdiocesan locations, with a fourth location added in 2012. Between July 1, 2014 and June 30, 2015:

- 606 employees, religious, seminarians and clergy were fingerprinted
- Electronic background checks were conducted on employees, clergy, and volunteers including: federal, state and county record checks, generating a total of 3,933 reports.

Fingerprinting services were offered on a regular schedule at four sites, including the Archdiocesan Pastoral Center in Hyattsville and parishes in Southern Maryland and upper Montgomery County, in an effort to make background check sites more accessible.

Based on a pilot project that concluded in April 2014, the Child Protection Advisory Board approved the recommendation that volunteers receive electronic background checks instead of fingerprinting. Such a change was considered to uphold just as thorough a screening,

but to provide more efficient and timely results. In compliance with local regulations, all employees, religious, seminarians and clergy of the archdiocese who have substantial contact with children are still required to undergo both an electronic background check and a fingerprint background check. On September 30, 2013, the new policy went into full effect. Currently, all volunteers must complete an electronic background check and employees, religious, seminarians and clergy must complete both fingerprinting and an electronic background check.

Child Abuse Allegations

The archdiocese is committed to working with civil authorities and law enforcement to protect children by preventing child abuse and neglect, reporting alleged incidents of abuse or neglect, cooperating in investigations of allegations, as well as advising victims of their right to report independently and supporting their exercise of that right. Archdiocesan policy requires all archdiocesan personnel to report any suspected abuse to the civil authorities. Reporting requirements, both civil and internal, are described in the Archdiocese of Washington's Child Protection Policy, which is published in writing and available online.

The Office of Child and Youth Protection continues to assist the community in these reporting obligations as well as offer guidance on navigating through the reporting process. Staff can be contacted by telephone, email or fax 24 hours a day, to receive allegations of suspected abuse, current or past, and to report such allegations to civil authorities.

Allegations against archdiocesan clergy in this reporting period.

There were no allegations of abuse made against any archdiocesan clergy this year.

Allegations against lay employees, contract workers and others in this reporting period.

There were no allegations of abuse made against any lay employees, contract workers or other individuals this year.

Financial Resources for Child Protection Efforts

Between July 1, 2014 and June 30, 2015, \$278,885.00 was spent on implementing and complying with the Child Protection Policy. This included salaries and benefits for the Office of Child and Youth Protection and the Office of Employee and Volunteer Services, materials, training stipends, fingerprinting and other equipment purchases and maintenance, and professional fees for the training program. An additional \$97,543.00 was spent on counseling and other assistance for victims and \$45,000.00 was provided in settlements in lieu of future counseling expenses.

Child Protection Policy Compliance

To ensure that all clergy, employees and volunteers who have substantial contact with children are in compliance with archdiocesan child protection requirements, the archdiocese requires each parish and school to designate a child protection compliance coordinator. The coordinator maintains compliance records for the parish/school location so only those who are fully compliant may work or volunteer with children. Coordinators have immediate online access

to compliance information for their location. During the reporting period, there were four group or individual trainings held for 50 new coordinators.

This process for monitoring compliance has been in place for seven years and is periodically reviewed and adjusted when appropriate.

Communications

The Secretariat for Communications maintained regular contact with parishes and schools on child protection matters. Information about the archdiocesan policies and procedures outlined in the Child Protection Policy continued to be available through the various channels of communication such as the archdiocesan newspapers and the archdiocesan website for use in church bulletins, as well as priest/parish/school newsletters and the archdiocesan website.

On the archdiocesan website under the Child Protection tab, several resources are available, including parent resources about the archdiocesan Child Protection Policy, safety tips for parents, as well as information about internet safety, cyber bullying, sexting, a “kid’s guide” to bullying, and healthy teen relationships. The archdiocesan website also includes other important resources to help protect children and create safe environments.

Conclusion and Direction for the Future

Over this past year, the archdiocesan staff continued to focus on implementation of the policy, training of compliance coordinators and helping to ensure that school and parish leaders know what steps to take if they suspect abuse. In addition, the archdiocese continued its efforts to raise broad awareness of child safety.

The Office of Child and Youth Protection focuses on two essential factors in protecting all of God’s children: education and empowerment. The office continues to introduce proactive measures which will educate the community and therefore empower individuals to keep children safe. The office is working on development of child abuse prevention presentations for various groups in the community to provide a comprehensive understanding of when and how to report abuse to the civil authorities and law enforcement.

The Office of Child and Youth Protection Team remains committed to developing innovative, proactive ways to educate the community on child abuse prevention.

National Audit

For this reporting period (2014-2015), the Archdiocese of Washington was once again found in compliance with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, enacted by the U.S. bishops in 2002. The archdiocese has been found in compliance every year since the audits were initiated.

Members of the Child Protection Advisory Board:

Eileen Dombo, Ph.D., LICSW, Chair
Rev. Msgr. William English
Susan Gibbs
Anne Hoffman, LCSW-C

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