



Annual Report

Child Protection Advisory Board for the Archdiocese of Washington

July 2006-June 2007

The Child Protection Advisory Board of the Archdiocese of Washington is an advisory body of mostly lay people with expertise in the area of child protection. The Board advises the Archbishop of Washington and his staff on child protection policies and procedures and monitors the archdiocese's compliance with its Child Protection Policy. In addition, the Board issues an annual report to the parishioners summarizing archdiocesan efforts, particularly in the areas of education, prevention and healing. Enclosed is this year's report, which covers the time period of July 2006-June 2007.

Two items are of particular note. This year marks the first revisions to the Child Protection Policy since 2003. In addition, this year the archdiocese implemented a comprehensive online system to assist schools and parishes as they track employee and volunteer compliance with the policy.

Policy Revision and Requirements

Revisions to the Child Protection Policy of the Archdiocese of Washington that were recommended by the Child Protection Advisory Board went into effect on March 1, 2007. These changes clarified and updated definitions and processes. A summary of the changes was published, along with the updated text, in the *Catholic Standard* and on the archdiocesan website, www.adw.org. The revisions also were sent to all priests, parishes and schools, and new policy booklets were produced in English and Spanish.

Fingerprinting and Background Checks

The Archdiocese of Washington has long mandated fingerprinting and background checks of clergy, employees and volunteers. In 2002, fingerprinting of all clergy, employees and volunteers who have substantial contact with children was centralized to take advantage of new and more effective technology and to better manage compliance. Between July 1, 2006 and June 30, 2007:

- 3,618 employees, volunteers and clergy were fingerprinted
- Two background checks were conducted on each person (FBI and Maryland State), generating 7,236 reports

Fingerprinting services were offered on a regular schedule at three sites throughout the archdiocese, including the Archdiocesan Pastoral Center in Hyattsville and parishes in Southern Maryland and upper Montgomery County to make this process as convenient as possible for employees and volunteers.

Education

Adult Education. The archdiocese, under the direction of the Director of Child Protection Services, continued to provide child abuse awareness and prevention education through *Protecting God's Children for Adults*, a nationally recognized program developed by National Catholic Risk Retention Group/Virtus:

- 80 safe environment training sessions, including seven in Spanish, were held between July 1, 2006 and June 30, 2007
- 4,800 individuals, including volunteers, new employees and clergy, attended these sessions.

Child Education. The Archdiocese, under the direction of the Superintendent of Schools and the Director of Religious Education, continued to provide safe environment education for the children in archdiocesan schools and religious education programs.

During the 2006-2007 school year, 18,657 Catholic school students received safe environment education. The Catholic Schools Office also began to replace the stand-alone program that had been used in 2005-2006, *Child Lures*, with Personal Safety Education standards that are a component of the health curriculum and are integrated with the schools' overall curriculum standards.

The Office of Religious Education provided safe environment training to 23,301 children in religious education programs during this reporting period, using the Curriculum Guide that was first introduced in the 2005-2006 school year. The Office of Religious Education also implemented a new compliance form in Spring 2007 to verify compliance with the education requirement at parishes throughout the archdiocese.

Child Abuse Allegations

All archdiocesan personnel are required to report suspected abuse. Reporting requirements, both civil and internal, are clearly described in the Child Protection Policy. The Office of Child Protection Services coordinates all reports of abuse, current and past.

Allegations against archdiocesan clergy. No allegations were received against any member of clergy currently in ministry. Three allegations were received against clergy who have been out of ministry for many years, one of them for more than 20 years:

- One involved a former priest who was convicted in the mid 1990's on charges brought by other victims
- Two involved a former priest who is awaiting trial on charges brought by two victims who came forward during the previous reporting period.

All of these allegations were reported to the authorities; consistent with its policy, the archdiocese has offered full cooperation with the investigation.

Allegations against lay employees and contract workers. Two allegations of inappropriate behavior against school employees were received and reported to civil authorities. The first involved an allegation of physical abuse and the second, an allegation of inappropriate use of e-mail. Both allegations were investigated by the authorities. Criminal charges were not brought against either employee. The individuals are no longer employed by the schools.

Financial Resources for Child Protection Efforts

Approximately \$366,231 was spent on implementing and complying with the Child Protection Policy from July 1, 2006-June 30, 2007. This included salaries and benefits for the Office of Child Protection Services 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 \$87,146 was spent on counseling for victims.

In December 2007, the archdiocese announced a settlement with 18 victims of abuse in the amount of \$1.3 million. The funds came from insurance and reserves. Many had been receiving assistance from the archdiocese for a number of years. Their allegations dated to 24-44 years ago and involved eight priests and a seminarian of another diocese. All of the clergy had been out of ministry for a number of years (three were deceased), all allegations had been reported to the authorities and eight of the nine men had been criminally prosecuted.

Child Protection Policy Compliance Pilot and Rollout of New Compliance System

During the prior reporting period, a pilot program to provide parishes/schools/agencies with immediate online access to compliance information was started. The archdiocese worked with the company that provides online registration and tracking for our adult safe environment training, *Protecting God's Children for Adults*, to develop this new web-based record system and to consolidate all central administration, parish and Virtus records into one system.

Pilot program and implementation. A nine-parish pilot program of the new system was conducted between May and October 2006. At the conclusion, each pilot site was asked to complete a questionnaire and offer recommendations before the program was rolled out archdiocesan-wide. In November 2006, pastors were informed of the new program and asked to appoint child protection compliance coordinators at each of the parishes.

Training of the coordinators was held between January 31, 2007 and March 29, 2007 in each of the 13 deaneries, with a “make-up” training on April 19, 2007 for those who could not attend their scheduled deanery training. Between May and July 2007, archdiocesan staff worked with local coordinators to assist them in reviewing and verifying records and ensuring consistent and correct data. This verification process was especially important this year since the data had been consolidated for the first time from multiple databases.

How the system works. Under the new compliance system:

1. An employee/volunteer who will have substantial contact with children sets up an online account and registers for a safe environment training course

2. Employee/volunteer completes the appropriate Application for Employment or Volunteer Services
3. Local coordinator notes receipt of the application in the individual's online account
4. Employee/volunteer schedules an appointment to be fingerprinted
5. Office of Employee and Volunteer Services/Human Resources enters the fingerprinting date and the results of the background checks into the online account
6. Employee/volunteer attends safe environment training course (before or after being fingerprinted) and submits policy acknowledgement form to the local coordinator
7. Local coordinator notes receipt of this form in the online account
8. Office of Child Protection Services verifies attendance at the safe environment training.

Local coordinators can view the status of each step in the process (application, training, background checks and acknowledgement form) for each individual at the local site. In addition, local coordinators can view a single report showing the compliance status of all employees and volunteer at that site. This enables the coordinators to track compliance instantly, to assist people to get into compliance and to identify those not in compliance and therefore ineligible to work or volunteer with minors.

This new system also will assist in compiling statistics for the annual audits conducted by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

Developing this new system was a major investment of time and resources. It was a team effort involving, among others, the Office of Child Protection Services, Office of Human Resources, Catholic Schools Office, parishes and schools in the archdiocese.

National Audit

The USCCB audits all dioceses on their compliance with the US Bishops' *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. An on-site audit was not conducted during the study period while the USCCB took steps to standardize its audit periods; however, the study period was included in an audit to be conducted in August 2007. That audit covers September 16, 2005 through June 30, 2007.

Communications

Regular announcements were sent to parishes and schools, including training requirements, the content of the policy and encouragement to report any allegations. A banner linking to a special section on child protection efforts was on the home page of the archdiocesan website, www.adw.org. That section included the Child Protection Policy (in English and Spanish), information on background checks, registration for adult safe environment training, a contact number to report any allegations and other information.

Additional communications were made through the *Catholic Standard*, on the archdiocesan website and with parishes regarding the policy changes, new online compliance system and the December 2007 settlement. In addition, the *Catholic Standard* and website reprinted the annual Child Protection Advisory Board report in full.

In addition to these efforts, the archdiocese undertook a series of communications efforts in September 2007 after criminal charges were placed against a former priest for an allegation of abuse that occurred 28 years ago. A letter from the archbishop was sent to the parish where the former priest served at the time of the alleged abuse. This letter was read at all Masses the weekend after the charges were filed and archdiocesan staff were present at all Masses to assist parishioners, answer questions and encourage anyone with additional information to come forward. Information about the charges was published in the *Catholic Standard* and other media. Information also was sent to all priests, principals, parishes and other staff in the archdiocese, and additional contact was made with all parishes where the former priest had served.

Conclusion and Direction for the Future

With the new compliance monitoring system fully in place, the archdiocese will focus on supporting and continuing training of the local child protection coordinators, as well as fine-tuning the system, based on feedback. The Child Protection Advisory Board, in turn, will monitor the progress made.

The Board also will seek feedback from parish leaders, such as pastors, principals, catechetical leaders and youth ministers, on the new system as well as overall implementation of the Child Protection Policy. This input will help inform future recommendations for policy and/or procedure changes. Feedback should be sent to childprotection@adw.org, and include the writer's name, position (if a volunteer or employee), parish, city and state.

Members of the Child Protection Advisory Board:

The Honorable Dennis McHugh, chair
Timothy Delaney
Eileen Dombo, Ph.D., LICSW
Monsignor William English
Nerita Estampador-Ulep, M.D.
Michael Nugent
Sandra Smith, Ed.D.