

# Annual Report from the Child Protection & Safe Environment Advisory Board

For July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023



## CHILD PROTECTION & SAFE ENVIRONMENT

(The following is the text of the annual report from The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington's Child Protection & Safe Environment Advisory Board for July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023.)

The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington (Archdiocese of Washington) once again maintained effective child protection and safe environment programs and initiatives during the 2022-2023 audit year. Some important aspects of the Archdiocese of Washington's safe environment program include:

- The Archdiocese of Washington has had a written Child Protection Policy for more than 30 years. This policy encompasses allegations of sexual abuse of minors as well as allegations involving abuse of vulnerable adults. This Policy is published online at [www.adw.org](http://www.adw.org), along with other important information.
- The Archdiocese of Washington conducts thorough criminal background checks on all individuals who have contact with minors.
- All employees, clergy, religious, and volunteers who have contact with minors in the Archdiocese of Washington must complete a safe environment training session.
- Each parish has a designated local child protection coordinator to assist the pastor in ensuring compliance.
- The Archdiocese of Washington also provides age-appropriate safe-environment education for all young people enrolled in our schools and religious education programs.
- The Archdiocese of Washington maintains an Office of Child Protection & Safe Environment, with staff available to assist parishes and schools in implementing these safe environment protocols and to provide pastoral support to survivors who report child sexual

abuse and their families.

- The Archdiocese of Washington is assisted in these efforts by an Advisory Board of experts.
- The Archdiocese of Washington's compliance is audited annually by a third-party auditing firm.
- This report is compiled annually, reviewed with the Advisory Board, and published on the Archdiocese of Washington's website.

### EDUCATION

The Archdiocese of Washington provides ongoing education to inform all community members about the importance of keeping children safe and protected in all environments – at homes, schools, religious institutions, and communities. The Child Protection & Safe Environment Policy mandates child abuse awareness and prevention education for all adults who have contact with children or vulnerable adults, as well as age-appropriate safe-environment education for all young people. Adults working with children are appropriately trained to identify signs and symptoms of possible abuse, neglect, or assault, and make the required reports to law enforcement and the Archdiocese. All clergy and all volunteers and employees who work with minors are required to be compliant with the Child Protection & Safe Environment Policy. Additionally, all volunteers, employees, clergy, and religious are mandated reporters under this important policy.

**Adult Education.** *Protecting God's Children* is the safe environment training program implemented by the Archdiocese of Washington. This nationally recognized program was developed by the National Catholic Risk Retention Group/Virtus.

Between July 1, 2022, and June 30, 2023:

- Seventy (70) *Protecting God's Children* training sessions, including eleven (11) sessions in Spanish, were conducted via live online interactive sessions.

Three Thousand One Hundred and Forty-Two (3,142) individuals, including lay volunteers and new employees, religious, seminarians, and clergy were trained.

**Child Education.** The Archdiocese, under the direction of the Superintendent of Catholic 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 training for adults. For the 2022-2023 school year:

- In total 29,659 Catholic school students and children in parish religious education programs received safe environment education.

### FINGERPRINTING AND BACKGROUND CHECKS

The Archdiocese of Washington recognizes that background checks are a crucial element in ensuring the safety of children and preventing abuse. All clergy and seminarians, and all employees, and volunteers who may have 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.

Fingerprint results are sent to the State and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) for review and alerts are sent to the Archdiocese of Washington:

- 3,689 new employees, religious, seminarians, clergy and volunteers were fingerprinted.
- 718 electronic background checks were conducted on clergy, religious, employees, seminarians, and volunteers, including federal, state, district federal, and county record checks.

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- The FBI sends alerts promptly to the Archdiocese of Washington when it receives a record of criminal activity, and all individuals who are fingerprinted remain in the FBI database for continual monitoring.

### CHILD-ABUSE ALLEGATIONS

The Archdiocese of Washington works with law enforcement and civil authorities to protect children through its abuse prevention efforts, by 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 and volunteers to report any suspected abuse of a minor to civil authorities. Reporting requirements, both civil and internal, are described in the Archdiocese of Washington's *Child Protection & Safe Environment Policy*, which is available as a handbook and online at [www.adw.org](http://www.adw.org).

- **Allegations of sexual abuse of a minor made against archdiocesan clergy between July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023:**

The Archdiocese of Washington's Child Protection & Safe Environment office received six allegations of sexual abuse during the 2022-2023 audit year. Four of these reports were allegations of historic child sexual abuse involving clergy who were either deceased or no longer in ministry. Two of these reports involved allegations against clergy in active ministry: (1) an allegation of sexual abuse against a priest involving alleged conduct in the early 1980s before he entered the seminary; and (2) an allegation of sexual abuse against a priest involving conduct that allegedly occurred in 2022. In all cases, the allegations were immediately reported to law enforcement and therapeutic support was offered to all survivors.

- **Allegations of sexual abuse of a minor against lay employees, contract workers and others between July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023:**

There were no allegations made against lay employees during the audit year.

### FINANCIAL RESOURCES FOR CHILD PROTECTION

Between July 1, 2022, and June 30, 2023, the Archdiocese of Washington paid \$409,447 in child protection and safe environment efforts. This included financial support for implementing the child protection

policy and providing appropriate resources to community members. Additionally, this amount included salaries and benefits for the Office of Child Protection & Safe Environment and the Office of Employee and Volunteer Services, materials, fingerprinting and other equipment purchases and maintenance, and professional fees for the training program. The Archdiocese of Washington paid \$75,000 in settlements to survivors of sexual abuse. An additional \$147,568.94 was spent on therapeutic services and other assistance for victims and survivors.

To ensure that all clergy, and seminarians, and all employees, and volunteers who have contact with children and vulnerable adults are compliant with Child Protection and Safe Environment requirements, the Archdiocese requires that each parish and school 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 and the vulnerable. Coordinators have immediate online access to compliance information for their location.

### NATIONAL AUDIT

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) arranges for an audit of the Archdiocese of Washington on its compliance with the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People (Charter)*. Auditors from a third-party auditing firm conduct interviews with archdiocesan staff and review records of safe environment practices, background checks, compliance monitoring, reporting abuse, and resources offered for healing. The audit involves annual data collection and review, as well as an on-site review every three years. The Archdiocese of Washington has been in full compliance with the audit every year since it began, including the 2022-2023 audit year.

During the reporting period of 2022-2023, The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington was determined to be in full 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.

### COMMUNICATIONS

The Archdiocese of Washington understands the importance of transparency and outreach to the community. The Archdiocese of Washington's website, [www.adw.org](http://www.adw.org), contains information about the policies and procedures outlined in the Child Protection & Safe Environment Policy. Child Protection information continues to be available through the archdiocesan newspapers in English and Spanish, archdiocesan and

parish social media, church bulletins, priest/parish/school newsletters, texts, and email, as well as on parish websites. Additional online supplemental training series called "Focus on the Child" is an additional training resource for community members.

The Child Protection & Safe Environment Annual Report is published each year in the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington's *Catholic Standard* and *El Pregonero*. Additionally, the report is posted on the archdiocesan website.

The Archdiocese of Washington's website, [www.adw.org](http://www.adw.org), has several resources available under the Child Protection tab, including information about the Archdiocesan Child Protection & Safe Environment Policy and safety tips for parents regarding internet safety, cyber bullying, and sexting. It also offers "kid's guides" to bullying and healthy teen relationships. The archdiocesan website includes other important resources to help protect children and provide guidance on creating and maintaining safe environments. The website also includes a link to the Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting Service, a third-party reporting system established by the U.S. Bishops to handle allegations involving bishops. These reports can be made at [ReportBishopAbuse.org](http://ReportBishopAbuse.org) or by calling the hotline number: (800) 276-1562.

The Archbishop of Washington, Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory, remains committed to all Child Protection & Safe Environment initiatives and programs. One of the most important events for Cardinal Gregory annually is his special Mass dedicated to victims, survivors, and their families in April during Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Month. The Cardinal offered this Mass at Our Lady of Mercy Parish and it was live-streamed so all members of the community could pray together for all affected.

### ADVISORY BOARD

One of the most valuable resources in the Archdiocese of Washington is its Advisory Board. During the 2022-23 audit year, the board was comprised of lay people with relevant expertise, including in law and law enforcement, psychology, social work, and counseling survivors of sexual abuse, trauma, and sexual assault. This committed group of experts provides valuable input to the Archbishop regarding the Archdiocese's policies and safe environment practices, and the Advisory Board also provides advice to the Archbishop regarding allegations of sexual abuse of minors or vulnerable adults made against clergy in accordance with Canon Law, the U.S. Bishops' *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People (Charter)*, and the *Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies for Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons (Essential Norms)*.