



# The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington

Post Office Box 29260, Washington, DC 20017-0260

Office of the Archbishop

Tuesday 10 December, 2024

Dear Brother Clergy, Consecrated Religious, Principals,  
Presidents, and Staff and Volunteers of the Archdiocese of Washington,

I have been proud to continue our collaborative efforts to ensure that our parishes, schools, and ministries are safe and secure, especially for the youth and vulnerable adults entrusted to us. Our Archdiocese of Washington has maintained comprehensive policies for the safeguarding of young people, regularly reviewed and updated, since 1986. Having completed another thorough evaluation and consultation process, I am now promulgating the updated *Safe Environment Policy for the Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Adults (2024)*.

The biggest change you will see is that the updated *Policy* has been re-organized into five sections, corresponding to the five pillars foundational to our safe environment efforts: (1) a comprehensive prevention program consisting of mandatory criminal background checks and training for all clergy and seminarians, and for all employees and volunteers who minister to young people and vulnerable adults; age-appropriate education for those we serve; a network of local parish compliance coordinators who work with our Office of Human Resources and Safe Environment; and other safeguards; (2) pastoral care, counseling, and other assistance offered to aid in the healing of survivors of abuse and their families, (3) mandatory reporting of all suspected abuse to civil authorities; (4) a clear, timely, and just process for responding to allegations, with "zero tolerance" for abuse; and (5) accountability and transparency in communicating with our faith communities and the public.

Throughout the Church of Washington, we must always maintain an unwavering commitment to safeguard those in our care. All who serve in our Archdiocese - clergy, seminarians, religious, employees, volunteers, and all ministries under the auspices of the Archbishop - are required to review and comply with the provisions of this updated *Safe Environment Policy*, which is published in electronic format and may be viewed and downloaded at <https://adw.org/safeenvironment>.

Please permit me to express my sincere gratitude to everyone who dedicates his or her time and talent in service of this local Church, especially those who minister to our young people and the vulnerable. May God continue to bless you and all those in your care.

With warmest regards, I am

Faithfully yours in Christ,

✠Wilton Cardinal Gregory,  
Archbishop of Washington