

# Baltimore policies aimed at protecting children

The Archdiocese of Baltimore employs a comprehensive program designed to protect children from sexual abuse. All archdiocesan employees must complete an application for employment and provide three references. They undergo fingerprint checks and online criminal history. They must also review the Statement of Policy for the Protection of Children and Youth and the Code of Conduct for Church Personnel. They additionally receive training regarding child abuse and the protection of children through an archdiocesan program called "STAND."

All volunteers must complete an application and review the same statements required of employees. Volunteers who have substantial contact with children must also provide three references, undergo online criminal history screening and STAND training.

Children receive age-appropriate education regarding child abuse and safe environments through the Family Life Catechesis.

Sean Caine, archdiocesan communications director, said more than 75,000 background checks have been completed. He noted that Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien met with a victim of sexual abuse on his first day as Archbishop of Baltimore. Throughout the archbishop's tenure, Caine said, Archbishop O'Brien has recognized the importance of protecting children and promoting healing for victims.

"The archbishop frequently communicates with leaders in parishes, schools, and other Catholic institutions about the critical importance of following our procedures to ensure the safety of every child in our care," Caine said, "and has been unequivocal in stating that it is the responsibility of every church employee and volunteer to create and maintain safe environments for the children entrusted to our care."

*More information is available at [www.archbalt.org/about-us/child-youth-protection/index.cfm](http://www.archbalt.org/about-us/child-youth-protection/index.cfm).*