



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE

OFFICE OF CHILD & YOUTH PROTECTION

October 22, 2018

Pastors and Principals,

Last year we commemorated the fifteenth anniversary of *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, the bedrock for the Archdiocese of Baltimore's current child protection policies set forth in the *Code of Conduct for Church Personnel in the Archdiocese of Baltimore* and *A Statement of Policy for the Protection of Children and Youth*. These policies are the framework for establishing and maintaining a culture of child protection characterized by safe environments and healthy relationships in our parish and school communities.

Committed to strengthening this culture of protection, the Archdiocese has promised to regularly review and update its policies. In 2014, both the *Code of Conduct* and *Statement of Policy* were revised when the Archdiocese introduced the use of an online compliance management system. In 2018, in accordance with some legislative initiatives, including one that resulted in a new statute governing schools in the State of Maryland, and in consultation with leaders in our schools and parishes, *A Statement of Policy for the Protection of Children and Youth* has been updated and will be effective November 1, 2018.

Key components that have been revised include: enhanced screening of employees; annual renewal of training for all employees and clergy; more prominent publication of phone numbers for reporting suspected child abuse to local Child Protective Services.

The enhanced screening of employees is addressed by *A Statement of Policy*, section, 3.3.10. As of November 1, 2018, **all** new employees must complete and submit a Child Protective Services (CPS) Background Clearance Form to the Maryland Department of Human Resources and provide the parish or school a copy of the submitted form within three days of beginning employment. Employees who do not comply with this requirement will not be allowed to continue employment. Should a report of alleged child abuse be discovered as the result of this process or at any time, the pastor or principal must contact the Office of Child and Youth Protection. All other derogatory information related to employees should be sent to the Division of Human Resources. Instructions about submitting this form are attached to this letter.

The new annual training update required for all Clergy, Religious, Seminarians for the Baltimore Archdiocese, Deacon Candidates serving at parishes and schools, and Employees is addressed by *A Statement of Policy*, section 4.2.1.1. The training will be an abbreviated version of the safe environment training in VIRTUS that is required prior to the start of employment in the Archdiocese of Baltimore. The Screening Coordinator at each location will be responsible for assigning the training to

employees. Instructions for assigning that training in VIRTUS will be sent to the Screening Coordinators directly. Employees will have until the end of the fiscal year, June 30 2019, to update their training. Training will be required to be updated by June 30 every year thereafter. Please note that the training provided by public schools will satisfy training requirements for outside educational providers employed by the public school system, section 3.7.2. of *A Statement of Policy*.

Finally, section 5.8 of *A Statement of Policy* requires that parishes and schools post in a public area of their buildings the telephone number of the local CPS reporting line in order to facilitate the proper reporting of all suspected child abuse to civil authorities. This information should also be accessible online. Attached to this email you will find the flyer you should post in your building and share on your parish or school web pages.

Maintaining and strengthening a culture of protection requires an enormous effort on the part of individuals in every parish and school. We appreciate the important role that you play in keeping the children entrusted to our care safe. As always, if you have question or concerns about this policy or its implementation please contact the Office of Child and Youth Protection at (410) 547-5348.

Thank you,



Jerri Burkhardt, Director
Office of Child and Youth Protection



Joseph Smith, Executive Director
Division of Human Resources