

Notification of Child Protection Policy, OPCYP Compliance Requirements and Mandatory Training

As part of our ongoing efforts to ensure the safety of all children in the Diocese and to carry out the mandates set forth by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' *Charter for the Protection of Children/Young People*, this notification features the diocesan *Policy on the Protection of Children/Young People and Prevention of Sexual Misconduct and/or Child Abuse* (Policy) and information on how this Policy relates to your role as a member of our diocesan family. The Policy is primarily a formal statement recognizing that all children have the right to be safe and protected from harm in any and all Church environments.

Diocesan policy requires that all adult personnel be compliant with the requirements of the Office for the Protection of Children/Young People (OPCYP) before beginning a work or youth-related ministry. "Personnel" includes every priest, deacon, religious sister or brother, seminarian, and adult employee of the Diocese (regardless of the individual's contact with children), in addition to all adult volunteers that have substantial contact with children or whose position naturally works with minors.

For all adult personnel, **full compliance is a condition of employment and ministry** and includes the completion of the electronic OPCYP application, clearance of the background checks, and the attendance to the initial and ongoing safe-environment training. It is important to note that there are slight differences between the background check requirements for employees versus volunteers with substantial contact with children. More information regarding the specific differences and instructions to complete the electronic application may be obtained from the liaison that has been established at your parish or school, which is your immediate contact with regards to compliance questions.

New and returning volunteers will need to receive the OPCYP instructions from the liaison. Once the application is completed (20-25 minutes) and the documents signed through DocuSign, it will automatically be sent to the parish liaison to review and approve the application/paperwork. Remember, for the utmost protection of children **and the protection of the reputations and integrity of the various ministries and volunteers**, individuals that have not been cleared by the OPCYP may not conduct any diocesan work or volunteer-related activities in-person or virtually until they are fully compliant.

In addition to the background check and paperwork requirements of compliance, there is also a training component for all personnel to complete within 45-days of the initiation of employment or volunteer activities, which is measured from the date their application is approved by the liaison. The initial 4-hour safe-environment training for adults in the Arlington Diocese is fulfilled through attending the VIRTUS *Protecting God's Children* program. All participants must pre-register online through the diocesan VIRTUS portal link. A link for this portal will be automatically sent to the applicant when the liaison approves the DocuSign envelope. Attendance to the initial 4-hour training is only required once. Individuals will receive multiple notifications leading up to the 45-day deadline to attend the training. A single 10-day extension will be given at the 45-day mark and after the extension has expired the individual and liaison will receive a termination notice regarding their employment or volunteer service. Please assist OPCYP to ensure this does not take place. It is the responsibility of ministry heads to ensure their volunteers are compliant.

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If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact OPCYP:

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Or visit the OPCYP Website at:
<https://www.arlingtondiocese.org/child-protection/>