

## FAQs of the Office of Child Protection and Safety (OPCYP)

### Q. Where do I obtain the instructions for the OPCYP online application?

A. Your parish liaison. If you don't know who your parish liaison is, speak with you Pastor, other parish staff, or email OPCYP ([opcypsupport@arlingtondiocese.org](mailto:opcypsupport@arlingtondiocese.org)).

### Q. Should the liaison review the application before it is submitted?

A. Yes. The liaison will review all the paperwork through DocuSign. If there are any errors, the liaison will contact the individual directly.

### Q. May an individual submit the application in a hardcopy form?

A. No. Bishop Burbidge mandated on February 15, 2019 that all paperwork will be submitted electronically. If there are portions of paperwork missing, OPCYP will work with the liaison to receive those pieces in paper form.

### Q. Can undocumented immigrants without a social security number complete the OPCYP compliance process?

A. The electronic application and forms that are used to process background checks for undocumented immigrants can be processed without a social security number. If an individual does not have a SSN, then he or she may still submit paperwork. Neither **OPCYP nor its vendors are mandated reporters for immigration violations**. If this changes in the future, all diocesan organizations and affiliations will be informed immediately. It is at the discretion of the individual to decide if they do or do not want to provide their information for a background check. However, if they do not complete all of paperwork for a background check they cannot work or volunteer with young people and should consider other types of ministry that do not involve youth.

### Q. What are the OPCYP requirements when attending events in extra-Diocesan jurisdictions?

A. When parishes leave the Diocese of Arlington and participate in events sponsored by other dioceses, our youth and adult volunteers must comply with that particular diocese's child protection policies – even if they differ with ours. The Diocese of Arlington has no jurisdiction to waive or exempt individuals from any of their requirements. Some key points to consider:

- OPCYP has good relationships with all the other diocese and is happy to reach out to the OPCYP Director and inquire what are the exact compliance requirements.
- Should your parish leave the Diocese of Arlington for a parish youth event that does not involve the other diocese, you are required to inform OPCYP so it may inform it's equivalent that you are in their jurisdiction. The majority of the time, that jurisdiction will allow you to abide by the Arlington Diocese's policies.
- Within our province, the Diocese of Arlington is the only diocese that allows high school students who are 18 or 19 to continue to participate in parish youth ministry and diocesan youth ministry events while they are in high school. The rest of the dioceses within the province treats them as adults without exception. Meaning, if they are to attend events, they will need to be fully compliant with the Diocese of Arlington prior to going to the event. This includes: 1) Completing the Virtus safe environment training since those jurisdictions do not allow adults to begin service until they have completed the training, and 2) The youth would sleep in the room with all other adults.

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### **Q. Can teens use cell phones at events?**

**A.** No. The 2022 update to the Code of Conduct for the Personnel and Volunteers in the Diocese of Arlington does not permit teens to use phone during youth events.

- Schools may allow the use of cell phones for educational and emergency purposes only.
- Cell phones are not permitted at summer camps, work camps, Steubenville Conferences, etc. even if the event or organization promotes it.
- Events at large amusement parks such as Kings Dominion, Busch Gardens, Six Flags, etc. for safety, youth may carry their cell phones on their person to be used **only** in the case of emergencies. Cell phones may not be used to check-in. Check-ins must be done in person and the entire group – no representatives.

### **Q. How can I make a report to Child Protective Services?**

**A.** Virginia Commonwealth law requires the reporting of any suspicion or knowledge or neglect and/or abuse of a minor within 24 hours of receiving the information. CPS now has two methods to report this:

- Website: <https://vacps.dss.virginia.gov>
- Phone: (800) 552-7096

If the report is a child-on-child allegation, and the alleged perpetrator is less than 5 years older, then the report is made to the local jurisdiction non-emergency police line.