



FOR THE SAKE OF GOD'S CHILDREN

PART III – SAFE ENVIRONMENTS

DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON
Revised 2009

A SAFE ENVIRONMENT IS A FRAME OF MIND, NOT JUST A LOCATION

This manual is a key element of the Diocese of Wilmington's **For the Sake of God's Children Program**. In 2002, Bishop Michael Saltarelli several committees of dedicated and gifted individuals were convened to develop the process for establishing a background check program for adults who minister to and with young people, to develop the Ethical Standards of Behavior for all Church Personnel, and to create guidelines defining what constitutes a safe environment for ministry. All of these efforts have focused on the protection of our children. Beyond the checklists and resources for developing and maintaining a safe environment you will find within the program, guidance for all who serve others. The program's ultimate goal is to assist adult leaders in remaining faithful examples of Christian ethics and personal integrity in all relationships.

The adult leaders mentioned above are properly designated *Church Personnel* in the Safe Environments program. This classification includes all who are accountable for creating a Safe Environment. The term *Church Personnel* is defined on page 6 of this section.

The purpose of this manual is to promote awareness through education, to prevent wrongdoing by establishing best practices and to change behavior through training. While not intended to be a comprehensive manual, it is also not intended as a list of suggestions. What are contained in this manual are **requirements** of the Diocese of Wilmington. By our baptism, we are all called into ministry to, with and for one another. Creating a Safe Environment is paramount to that ministry. For the sake of the young people of the Diocese of Wilmington, the following checklists and resources are presented.

Following this introductory information are numerous checklists designed to assist ministry leaders in creating safe environments. Please note that some events and activities may require the proper completion of more than one checklist to ensure compliance with the standards of this program. Your diligence and care in meeting these expectations is essential to the ultimate success of this program. The goal of this program is not to create an additional administrative burden. Rather, the intention is to create environments that are welcoming, safe and free of that which has the potential to cause harm to leaders and to young people.

The lists contained in this manual may be duplicated as needed. Church Personnel are responsible for ensuring that these guidelines are followed each and every time an activity or event takes place. In time, these practices will become our "second nature".

Thank you for your continued ministry to and with the young church of the Diocese of Wilmington. Thank you, too, for your commitment to create environments rooted in mutual respect and sustained by faith. Your role is key in building the Kingdom of God.....for the sake of God's children.

BEFORE YOU READ THIS MANUAL

ACCOUNTABILITY/COMPLIANCE

1. The individual volunteer or employee is required to complete a criminal background check in order to obtain clearance for ministry in parish or diocesan service.
2. A record of all cleared individuals who are eligible for service in parish or diocesan ministry will be maintained at each parish and on a Master List that is available in the diocesan offices overseeing particular ministries.

The terms “cleared” and “clearance” indicate that the results of an individual's criminal background permit him/her to be eligible for placement in service in a diocesan/parish ministry. Obtaining a “cleared” status (or obtaining “clearance”) **does not** mean, however, that the individual has completed the necessary training for a specific ministry.

ROLE OF THE INDIVIDUAL

1. Obtain and complete the screening form.
2. Submit the form with the appropriate payment.
3. Once the check is completed, review the results of the criminal background check for accuracy.
4. Update individual information relative to any incident which may jeopardize one's ability to continue in service in the Diocese; (e.g., any arrest, change of name, address, phone number, car registration/insurance information.)
5. Receive, review and fully understand the applicable Diocesan Standards. Submit signed Acknowledgement of Receipt Form for Volunteers and the Volunteer Covenant.
6. Review and act in accord with all Diocesan policies applicable to area of ministry.
7. Submit update forms to the Office of Human Resources of the Diocese of Wilmington as necessary (i.e., whenever any updates to personal information are necessary). *This form is available at the parish and / or may be printed from the Diocesan Website (www.cdow.org).*

ROLE OF PARISH/SCHOOL/DIOCESAN CONTACT

1. Provide screening forms to those needing background checks.
2. Advise those completing the background check form of his/her financial responsibility (per individual parish circumstances).
3. Follow procedures for submission of screening form.
4. Ensure that the Standards Acknowledgement Form has been received, reviewed and is signed and filed for each person.
5. Accept for service only those who have been properly cleared for service.
6. Ensure that those cleared for service in a particular ministry have received the proper training for full participation in that ministry.
7. Ensure that individuals are aware of applicable Diocesan policies in the area of ministry in which they are engaged.

WHO ARE “CHURCH PERSONNEL?”

Relationships among people are the foundation of Christian ministry and are central to the life of the Church. The Standards defined herein are intended to assist all who fulfill the many roles that create the living Church. The Standards intentionally address all ministerial relationships. Particular attention is paid to those whose ministry calls them to demonstrate their love and compassion for children and young people within genuine and sincere relationships.

All Church Personnel are asked to carefully consider each standard presented before agreeing to adhere to it in their service to the Diocese of Wilmington. An Acknowledgement of Receipt must be completed by each cleared individual to indicate receipt of, understanding of, and willingness to adhere to the Standards.

N.B.: With regard to the Standards, the following definition of Church Personnel shall apply:

The Bishop and all who share his ministry:

1. Priests incardinated in the Diocese of Wilmington.
2. Priests who are members of religious communities (e.g. Oblates, Franciscans, and Jesuits etc.) assigned to the Diocese.
3. Priests of other jurisdictions who minister within the Diocese.
4. Other priests including those who are retired, or who have been granted canonical faculties to do part-time or supply ministry.
5. Deacons incardinated in this Diocese.
6. Permanent deacons with canonical faculties to function in this Diocese.
7. Seminarians and those enrolled in the Permanent Diaconate Formation Program.
8. Women religious and religious brothers working in the Diocese, its parishes, schools or agencies.
9. All paid personnel whether employed in areas of ministry or other kinds of services provided by the Diocese, its parishes, schools or other agencies.
10. All volunteers. This includes any person who enters into or offers himself/herself in a ministry to and with young people.

WHY A SAFE ENVIRONMENT?

As a faith-filled people, we value and honor every individual as created in the image and likeness of God. In the works and ministries of the Diocese of Wilmington we, therefore, provide a safe environment for children, young people, and their families. Honesty, trust, and mutual respect frame an environment where healthy and responsible relationships prevail, boundaries are clear, and Behavioral Standards are mutually embraced. We are committed to providing for the safety and protection of God's children through a selfless sharing of our gifts and talents.