

**POLICY, PROCEDURES, AND GUIDELINES  
ON CHILD ABUSE  
ARCHDIOCESE OF SAINT LOUIS**

**September 2013**

## **Introduction**

The following Policy and Guidelines (“Policy”) have been developed by the Archdiocese of St. Louis (“Archdiocese”) to give guidance to employees, volunteers, religious, priests and deacons in the Archdiocese on the subject of prevention of child abuse and the protection of children and to address the needs of victims of child abuse. For purposes of the Policy, the Archdiocese of St. Louis includes schools, parishes and agencies of the Archdiocese (hereafter collectively referred to as “SPA”). The primary goal of the Archdiocese in this regard is to prevent child abuse, and the primary method of prevention is education and care in the hiring and evaluation of employees and volunteers. Since the possibility of child abuse has to be recognized, the Policy also covers the investigation and reporting of incidents of child abuse, and assistance to those affected by abuse.

## **Policy**

**The Archdiocese is committed to the prevention of child abuse and to assisting those who are affected by incidents of child abuse. The Archdiocese is also committed to complying with legal requirements for reporting child abuse. For purposes of this policy, child abuse means physical injury, sexual abuse, or emotional abuse inflicted on a child, other than by accidental means. All employees, volunteers, religious, priests and deacons working in the schools, parishes, and agencies of the archdiocese are expected to support this Policy and to comply with the Guidelines developed to implement the Policy.**

## **I. Prevention of Abuse**

### **I.1. Safe Environment Program**

The Archdiocese has developed a Safe Environment Program to ensure the safety of our children and youth, as required by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (“USCCB”) “Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People.” This program provides a framework for the Archdiocese to cooperate with parents, civil authorities, educators, and community organizations to make and maintain a safe environment for children.

The Safe Environment Program has components for children/youth, parents, employees, volunteers, religious, priests and deacons, and third party contractors doing business with the Archdiocese. Each of these components is discussed in turn.

Effective June, 2006 implementation of the Safe Environment Program in the Archdiocese was assumed by the newly created Safe Environment Program Office.

### **I.2 Safe Touch Program for Children and Youth**

Students in schools, parish schools of religion and other educational programs in the Archdiocese are to attend age-appropriate safe touch education programs, approved by the Archdiocesan Child Safety Committee, that address child abuse and the need to report any attempted or actual abuse to their parents, teachers, principals or other appropriate persons. Parents are welcome to view the education materials in advance. If a parent has concerns or objections about such material, these are to be addressed at the school and/or parish level, as appropriate. Parents will be offered the opportunity to request their children not attend these education programs. If they do so request, parents will be given safe touch materials to present to their children at home. If parents request that their child(ren) not attend the program, and refuse to accept the safe touch materials, this information should be noted in the student (s)’ file. The Safe Touch Program for Children and Youth will be coordinated and taught by a Lead Teacher designated by the principal or pastor.

### **I.3. Safe Environment Program for Employees, Volunteers, Religious, Priests and Deacons**

The program requires that all employees, volunteers, religious, priests and deacons who work with or near minors on a regular basis - that is someone who would be working with or near minors three or more times a year, would be

participating in an overnight program with minors, or would be on a list of persons eligible to be working with minors, even if it is not known whether or how often he/she would actually be scheduled - must do the following:

- (1) attend the “Protecting God’s Children” program,
- (2) undergo a Child Abuse / Criminal Record check upon being hired, or volunteering, and in even numbered years thereafter, and
- (3) agree to abide by the Code of Ethical Conduct.
- (4) If applicant has resided out of state in the past five years, they must agree to undergo FBI fingerprinting or an out of state background check through American Checked, Inc.

**I.4. Training:** Employees, volunteers, religious, priests and deacons who work with or near minors on a regular basis and or 18 years old and have graduated high school must attend the “Protecting God’s Children” program. This program provides education regarding what signs to look for in the detection of abuse, both in circumstances and events that might indicate abuse and in the children themselves. Training will be renewed every five years through Virtus online.

**I.4.1 Screening Archdiocesan Priests and Deacons:** Priests and deacons who work with or near minors on a regular basis must undergo a Child Abuse / Criminal Record check prior to being placed in a position to have contact with minors. This screening requirement is completed by the Safe Environment Office, in conjunction with Office of Priest Personnel for Priests and Religious. The Office of Permanent Diaconate will complete background checks for Deacons.

**I.4.2 Screening Employees, Volunteers and Religious:** Employees, volunteers and religious who work with or near minors on a regular basis must undergo a Child Abuse / Criminal Record check prior to being placed in a position to have contact with minors.

As stated above, for employees and volunteers, the following guidelines are to be followed when hiring an employee or recruiting a volunteer:

- a. When hiring an employee, utilize a standard application form developed by the Archdiocese, which requests information regarding any history of abuse. When recruiting a volunteer, it encourages but not required to utilize a Volunteer application Form.
- b. Check references and other information and other information provided by the applicant, appropriate the position being sought.
- c. A Child Abuse/Criminal Records check for prior history of abuse in Missouri must be made for each applicant. The check must be accomplished through the Missouri Family Care Safety Registry (FCSR). . Effective fall of 2010, the registration and screening process for background checks in the FCSR will be conducted on line. For information about the online process go to the FCSR home page at <http://health.mo.gov/safety/fcsr> or call the Safe Environment Office at 314.792.7271.

Employees or volunteers who have resided outside of the state of Missouri any time over the last five years will have to undergo a nationwide FBI finger print background check and/or alternate out of state background checks through American Checked, Inc.

d. **To ensure consistency throughout the Archdiocese, if the report from the FCSR is returned with information related to a past offense allegedly committed by an applicant, employee or volunteer, please contact the Director of the Safe Environment Program at 314.792.7271 for guidance.**

e. Records of persons not given positions because of concerns relating to placing them in contact with children should be maintained for five years. Records of persons given positions should be permanently maintained after employment has terminated.

f. In addition to the hiring and pre-employment screening process used for new employees, there should be an ongoing evaluation of all employees who work with or near minors on a regular basis. Every even numbered year, a

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Child Abuse / Criminal Records check through the Missouri FCSR will be conducted by the administrator or child safety coordinator.

**I.4.3 Code of Ethical Conduct:** Employees, volunteers, religious, priests and deacons who work with or near minors on a regular basis must read the Code of Ethical Conduct and sign the Commitment to Ethical Conduct.

#### **I.4. Safe Environment Program for Order Priests and Brothers and Women Religious Serving in SPA**

Priests and brothers from religious orders and women religious who are in a position to work with or near minors on a regular basis in SPA in the Archdiocese must follow the same compliance regulations as other adults who work or volunteer with minors. In addition these priests and religious require a letter from their religious superior upon their arrival to the diocese stating there is nothing in their past that would prevent them from working with children. Order priests assigned to be pastors or associate pastors in the Archdiocese are to be cleared through the Office of Priest Personnel.

Religious order priests who occasionally help with support ministry at parishes must have their compliance monitored by the Safe Environment Office.

#### **I.5 Safe Environment Program for Persons Associated with Home School Activities Conducted in Parish Facilities**

Due to the unique structure of home school programs conducted in parish facilities, which by their very nature have almost all parents participate in some form, the following persons associated with home school programs must complete the requirements of the Safe Environment Program of the Archdiocese of St. Louis: (1) those persons who receive monetary compensation in connection with their efforts relating to home school programs conducted in parish facilities; (2) those persons who have an official role in home school programs (such as “director” or “secretary” or similar designations/representatives) and/or (3) those persons who may be in a position to be alone with a child or children (who is not their child) in parish facilities (all three groups collectively referred to as “Home School Agents”). The Safe Environment Program requires that Home School Agents do the following:

- (1) attend the “Protecting God’s Children” program,
- (2) undergo a Child Abuse / Criminal Record check, and
- (3) agree to abide by the Code of Ethical Conduct.
- (4) if applicant has resided out of state in the past five years, they must agree to undergo FBI fingerprinting or an out of state background check through American Checked, Inc.

**I.6. Training:** Home School Agents must attend the “Protecting God’s Children” program. This program provides education regarding what signs to look for in the detection of abuse, both in circumstances and events that might indicate abuse and in the children themselves.

**I.6.1 Screening Home School Agents:** Home School Agents must undergo a Child Abuse / Criminal Record check prior to being permitted to participate in Home School Programs in parish facilities.

A Child Abuse / Criminal Records check for prior history of abuse in Missouri should be made for each Home School Agent.

This check may be accomplished through the **Missouri Family Care Safety Registry (“FCSR”)** This check will provide information from open records from the Missouri Criminal Record Repository and information from the Missouri Division of Family Services’ Central Registry.

If the Home School Agent currently resides or recently resided in another state, they will have to undergo a nationwide FBI finger print background check when they enter the Safe Environment Program as well as the FCSR screening. Subsequent checks will be FCSR screenings. If the out-of-state location is Colorado, Florida, Kansas, Illinois, or Texas,

the employee or volunteer will only have a background check from that particular state, in addition to the FCSR screening.

**I.6.2 Code of Ethical Conduct:** Home School Agents must read the Code of Ethical Conduct and sign the Commitment to Ethical Conduct. The Code of Ethical Conduct must be balanced with the fact that some of those who sign the Code are also parents of students in the program and in this context, the provisions of the Code should be interpreted broadly to accommodate the parental relationship.

**I.6.3 Reporting:** Each Director of the home school program for each parish must work with the parish safety coordinator to ensure that the Home School Agents have completed the Safe Environment Program requirements.

## **I.7 Safe Environment Program for Contractors**

Contractors are those individuals who work in schools, parishes or agencies who are in a position to have contact with children but who are not directly employed by the school, parish or agency. These individuals could be working for a company or group contracted to provide specific services. Examples include individuals working for a cafeteria service, bus company, maintenance firm, or latch key program.

**I.7.1 Screening:** It is important to make sure that these individuals are screened with regard to any past history of child abuse. **The responsibility for such screening rests with the employer, not with the administrator of the school, parish or agency.** The administrator is only responsible to determine that the contracted firm undertakes the screening at the appropriate time. Administrators should require evidence that such an evaluation has occurred. For example, firms could be asked to supply a copy of the employee's screening form from the State of Missouri. If a firm does not cooperate in this screening effort, another firm should be sought.

a. A records check for prior history of child abuse in Missouri should be made for new independent contractor personnel who will have contact with children at a school or parish of the Archdiocese by the firm employing the individual. The Archdiocese of St. Louis, not the State of Missouri, requires this check. This check is accomplished through the Missouri Family Care Safety Registry.

b. Employees or volunteers who have resided outside of the state of Missouri any time over the last five years will have to undergo a nationwide FBI finger print background check and/or alternate out of state background checks through American Checked, Inc.

c. The administrator should request verification each year from the employer of the independent contractor personnel working at the school, parish or agency that all new employees have been screened. New employees should be evaluated immediately upon hire and prior to the employee being assigned to the school, parish or agency.

d. In addition to the hiring and pre-employment screening process used in hiring new employees there should be an ongoing evaluation of independent contractor personnel who are working with or who are in a position to have contact with children. Every even numbered year the employer should send a request to the Missouri Family Care Safety Registry.

**I.7.2 Code of Ethical Conduct:** The Safe Environment Program also requires that all contractors working with the Archdiocese who may have contact with minors sign a Code of Ethical Conduct. Good judgment should be the rule. Certain types of Contractors are exempted, while others are not.

**I.7.3 Code of Ethical Conduct for Student Volunteers or Working with Minors:** Young people under the age of 18, or *who are still* in high school, who work or volunteer with or near minors as part of a high school service project or any other parish program or activity must sign the **Code of Ethical Conduct for Student Volunteers working with Minors**. Parents or guardians must also sign this form.

## **I.8. Minimum Age for Lead Chaperones for Events involving Minors:**

For purposes of compliance, someone who is 18 years old and out of high school is considered an adult. However, when someone is serving as the lead chaperone for an event involving minors he/she must be at least 21 years old, and his/her fitness must be determined by the SPA sponsoring the youth event.

### **I.9. Background Evaluations For Undocumented Volunteers:**

Undocumented volunteers, who by the nature of their presence in this archdiocese cannot be subject to the same Safe Environment Program-required background checks performed on other adults in this archdiocese, must adhere to the following guidelines if they want to volunteer around children:

Every effort must be made to ensure there is no documentation for the individual. If the individual claims to have no documentation when he/she really does, he/she must stop volunteering immediately.

There must be a waiting period of six months after the initial request to volunteer before the individual can begin to volunteer

The volunteer service must be performed in tandem with another adult who is in full compliance with the Safe Environment Program

There must be two or more local character references, not from the same family.

Both other components of Safe Environment Program compliance – the Protecting God’s Children workshop and the reading and signing of the Code of Ethical Conduct – must be completed.

### **I.10. Policies for Registered Sex Offenders**

#### **I.10.1 Guidelines for Mass**

Certainly no one should ever be denied participation in liturgy but a few precautions are in order. The registered sex offender must sit in the same area every Sunday. At the discretion of the Pastor or his delegate(s), an usher or other responsible person may be alerted to the individual’s presence. The individual may not participate in any special role in the Mass or in any parish ministry. Such participation would likely result in the ability for the individual to have contact with minors and/or could put the individual in a position where he/she could develop a relationship of trust with minors.

#### **I.10.2 Guidelines for sex offender participation at parishes and schools**

**A sex offender may not hold a volunteer or employee position at a parish or school and has a responsibility to make himself/herself known to the Pastor (or his delegated Associate Pastor or Deacon) or to the Chief School Administrator if attending parish or school events.** (*Reference: Parish School Safety Plan for the Protection of Minors and High School Safety Plan for the Protection of Students*)

The decision of whether to allow a person who is a registered sex offender, or who is otherwise known to be a sex offender, to enter parish property shall be made by the Pastor or his delegate(s). The decision of whether to allow a person who is a registered sex offender, or who is otherwise known to be a sex offender, to enter an archdiocesan high school shall be made by the Chief School Administrator.

#### **I.10.3 Guidelines for School/Parish Activities and Activities Involving Archdiocesan High Schools**

If a person who is a registered sex offender, or who is otherwise known to be a sex offender, has a close relative (e.g. child, step-child, grandchild, sibling, niece or nephew) in a Catholic school or Catholic parish-related program, he/she may be allowed to attend activities or programs for that close relative (e.g. parent-teacher conferences, athletic events, school plays) provided that the individual agrees to abide by the “**Parish School Safety Plan For the Protection of Minors**” or the “**High School Safety Plan For the Protection of Students,**” as appropriate.

The “**Parish School Safety Plan for the Protection of Minors**” requires that the individual must always be accompanied by one or more adults (Accompanying Adult) who must be identified to and approved by the Pastor or his delegate(s). Accompanying Adults should also be made known to the head of the school or activity the individual may want to attend.

The “**High School Safety Plan for the Protection of Students**” requires that the individual must always be accompanied by one or more adults (Accompanying Adults) who must be identified to and approved by the Chief School Administrator.

Violation of a safety plan could result in the individual being banned from attending future activities.

**I.11. Audits:**

The Safe Environment Program Office and independent auditors hired by the USCCB will audit parishes and the Archdiocese on a regular basis still to be determined to ensure that all three requirements of the Safe Environment Program have been met. Archdiocesan High Schools and certain agencies of the Archdiocese are also accountable for ensuring that all Safe Environment Program requirements have been met, and this information will be provided to USCCB auditors.

## II. Child Abuse/Neglect Reports (CA/N reports)

### **II. Child Abuse Reporting**

The Archdiocese of St. Louis supports and complies with federal and state child abuse prevention and reporting laws. Archdiocesan policies and procedures are designed to support compliance with those laws. Questions regarding Archdiocesan policies and procedures may be directed to the Office of General Counsel, the Office of Child and Youth Protection and the Safe Environment Program Office.

#### **II.1. Statutes**

Sections 210.110 through 210.165 of the Revised Statutes of Missouri contain the law regarding Child Abuse and Neglect in Missouri.

#### **II.2. Definitions:**

Abuse is any physical injury, sexual abuse, or emotional abuse inflicted on a child other than by accidental means by those responsible for the child's care, custody or control.

Neglect is the failure to provide, by those responsible for the care custody and control of the child, the proper or necessary support, education as required by law, nutrition or medical, surgical or other care necessary for the child's well being.

A Child is any person under the age of 18 at the time of the alleged abuse.

#### **II.3. Mandated Reporters:**

Mandated reporters are those who are required by law to report suspected child abuse. This includes but is not limited to Archdiocesan personnel who have *responsibility for the care, custody and control of children*, such as

- Principals, Teachers and other School Personnel
- Clergy and Religious
- Pastors and parish staff
- Agencies and Offices that serve children

Missouri law requires that a mandated reporter make the **CA/N report** himself/herself rather than delegating that responsibility to a supervisor. Questions regarding Archdiocesan Policy on the reporting of abuse may be directed to the Office of General Counsel, the Office of Child and Youth Protection or the Safe Environment Program Office. It is required that suspected child abuse be *promptly* reported for the safety and wellbeing of children.

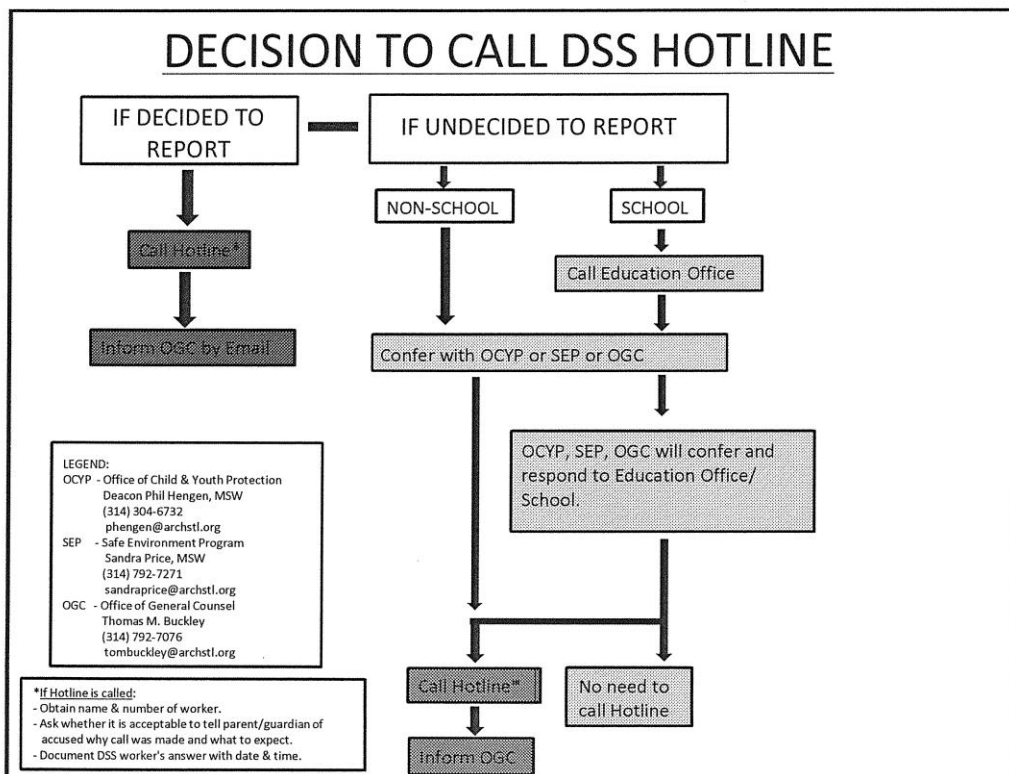
#### **II.4. Reporting Requirements**

A person is required to report when he/she has *reasonable cause* to suspect that a child has been or may be subjected to abuse or neglect or when he/she *observes* a child being subjected to conditions or circumstances which would reasonably result in abuse or neglect. **"The person who initially suspects/observes the abuse must make the report himself/herself, and cannot delegate this responsibility to someone else, including that person's supervisor."** All adults in the Archdiocese employed or volunteer, who have regular contact with children are required to complete the Protecting God's Children Program. This program teaches participants how to identify potential or actual abuse situations.



## II.5 Archdiocesan Reporting Policy and Procedures

1. All who are mandated reporters must report suspected cases of child abuse in accordance with existing archdiocesan policy and Missouri statutes. The attached flow chart is a reference guide to help all mandated reporters follow the same procedures.
2. When it is clear that a report should be made to the Division of Social Services (DSS), Children's Division, a hotline call will be placed and an email report will be sent to Tom Buckley, General Counsel. This email report will be maintained in a confidential file in the Office of General Counsel.
3. If there is doubt as to whether a hotline call should be made or not, the school will consult with the Education Office, and that office may in turn consult with the Office of Child Protection, the Safe Environment Program and the Office of General Counsel. The directors of those three offices will confer and make a decision regarding the need to make a hotline report or not, and make that decision known to the school and/or the Education Office. The same procedure will be followed in the case of a parish, agency or office with the exception that the Education Office need not be consulted. A report will be maintained in a confidential file in the Office of General Counsel.
4. Nothing in this policy or these procedures is intended to inhibit mandated reporters from making a hotline report if in his/her judgment a child is at risk and/or the mandated reporter thinks there is a legal obligation to make a hotline report. This policy and these procedures are designed to assist those who are required to report abuse, to help assure that reports are made in a proper manner and to document that reports have been made.
5. Questions may be directed to any of the following:  
 Deacon Phil Hengen (314 792-7704 [phengen@archstl.org](mailto:phengen@archstl.org))  
 Sandra Price (314 792-7271 [sandraprice@archstl.org](mailto:sandraprice@archstl.org))  
 Tom Buckley (314 792-7076 [tombuckley@archstl.org](mailto:tombuckley@archstl.org))



## **II.6 Investigation Process**

Suspected child abuse or neglect should be promptly reported. Missouri law mandates that an internal investigation of suspected abuse cannot be undertaken until the suspected abuse is first reported to the DSS Hotline or Law Enforcement. The Archdiocese may then investigate the allegation after the hotline report has been made. This will be done in consultation with the DSS Hotline workers and/or Law Enforcement so as not to impede their investigation. The internal investigation is generally carried out by designated persons in the Office of General Counsel, the Office of Child and Youth Protection, the Safe Environment Program Office, the Vicar for Priests, and the Education Office as indicated. The Archdiocesan Review Board will generally be involved in the internal investigation process.

## **II.7 Investigation Outcomes**

1. The DSS Children's Division will take steps to ensure the safety of a child who has been or is likely to be abused. This may include referring the matter to law enforcement. When this is the case, the Archdiocese will fully cooperate with the DSS Children's Division and Law Enforcement in their investigation and disposition of the case.
2. The Archdiocese will also investigate the allegation and determine if there has been a violation of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People or the Code of Ethical Conduct. This investigation will generally involve the Archdiocesan Review Board, the Office of General Counsel, the Office of Child and Youth Protection, the Safe Environment Program Office, the Vicar for Priest and the Education Office as needed.
3. Any disciplinary action (including but not limited to termination) against an employee with a proven or substantiated allegation of the sexual abuse of a minor will comply with applicable civil and canonical laws.
4. Confidential documentation of allegations and abuse reports will be maintained by the Office of General Counsel. Documentation should be limited to facts observed or reported and should not contain opinions or speculation.

**MISSOURI DIVISION OF FAMILY SERVICES  
CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE NUMBER**

**1.800.392.3738 (For Missouri Residents)  
1.573.751.3448 (For Outside Missouri)**

For reporting procedures and other information related to reported incidents of suspected abuse, please refer to the Archdiocese's Policies, Procedures and Guidelines on Child Abuse.

**II.8.16.** All SPA in the Archdiocese should make the following information readily available.

**TO REPORT OLD OR CURRENT ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL ABUSE BY A MEMBER OF THE CLERGY OR BY LAY EMPLOYEES OR VOLUNTEERS OF THE ARCHDIOCESE CONTACT THE ARCHDIOCESE'S OFFICE OF PROTECTION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH AT 314.792.7704**

### **III. Assistance**

#### **III.1 Assistance to Those Affected by Child Abuse**

If, in spite of efforts to prevent child abuse, a child is abused by an employee, volunteer, priest, deacon or religious providing services for a school, parish or agency of the Archdiocese, the victim and his or her family should be attended to with compassion by the pastor, principal, agency director or other appropriate person. This will include being assisted in obtaining counseling and medical care as may be needed. Confidentiality regarding victims of child abuse will be maintained consistent with legal requirements.

#### **III.2 Perpetrators of Child Abuse**

If, after investigating an incident of alleged child abuse in accordance of these Guidelines, it is established that abuse has occurred or that it is probable that abuse has occurred, steps will be taken to remove the perpetrator, or alleged perpetrator, from any position which has contact with children. Other appropriate disciplinary steps will be considered and taken as required by the circumstances. Appropriate consideration should also be given to the care for and the rehabilitation of the perpetrator, which could include advising the person to seek counseling or therapy.

**IV. Questions and Answers**  
**Policy and Guidelines**  
**on**  
**Child Abuse**

**(Revised May 3, 2012)**

**Q. 1 Why have these policies and guidelines on child abuse been developed and approved by the St. Louis Archdiocese?**

**A.** The Archdiocese of St. Louis is committed to the prevention of child abuse in all schools, parishes and agencies (SPA) of the Archdiocese, to assisting those who are affected by incidents of child abuse, and to compliance with legal requirements for reporting child abuse. The Archdiocese is also committed to being in compliance with the USCCB Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People.

**Q. 2 Must all SPA comply with these policies and guidelines or are they optional?**

**A.** All adult employees, volunteers, religious, priests and deacons of the Archdiocese of St. Louis who work or volunteer with or near children on a regular basis must support the policies and comply with the guidelines developed to implement the policies. "Adult" for these purposes is defined as someone 18 or over and out of high school. "Regular basis" is defined as contact with or near children three or more times a year.

**Q. 3 Can other safety programs or background checks be substituted for those listed in this Policy Book?**

**A.** Unless approval is given by the Child Safety Committee and/or the Safe Environment Program Office no other programs or background checks can be utilized.

**Q. 4 What steps should a SPA take prior to employing personnel?**

**A.1** Each applicant must complete a standard application form developed by Archdiocese. Links to the online application can be found here: <http://archstl.org/hr/jobs>

**A.2** References and other information from application form as appropriate must be checked.

**A.3** The SPA Child Safety Coordinator (CSC) will have each new adult employee or volunteer fill out the FCSR Worker Registration Form, see Appendix 3. Once the form is completed the CSC will register the person on line and conduct all subsequent screening requests on line. Information about the online screening process is available on the FCSR home page <http://health.mo.gov/safety/fcsr> or by calling the Safe Environment Program Office at 314.792.7271

This step must be repeated in even-numbered years for all employees

**A.4** Follow-up applicant interviews and decisions may be necessary based on information developed.

**A.5** It is acceptable practice to allow an employee to begin service at a school, parish or agency while his/her background check is pending although, if possible, the background check information should be received prior to the employee beginning his/her service. Background checks submitted after an employee begins his/her service must be addressed as a high priority and marked accordingly. There must however be notation in local Safe Environment Program records that a background check has been submitted, and there must be an agreement with the employee and the local administration that if the background check reveals serious problems or areas of concern the employment will likely be suspended or terminated

**A.6** The individual also must complete the workshop and code of conduct requirement of the Safe Environment Program.

**Q. 5 Do these employment steps pertain only to employees?**

A. No. As with employees, it is important to conduct an evaluation of volunteers who will be working with or near minors on a regular basis. Volunteers will follow the same general steps as outlined in Q. 4. with the exception they will complete the volunteer application form instead of the employee application form.

**Q. 6 Do these steps pertain to all SPA volunteers?**

A. No. The guidelines pertain to those volunteers who will be performing volunteer service on a regular basis with or near minors in a SPA of the Archdiocese. For volunteers who assist fewer than three times a year or for a particular, non-overnight, event, it is impractical to use the process outlined in the manual. *Due care should nonetheless be used in the selection of occasional volunteers.* However even if there is just a possibility that an individual will be a volunteer working regularly with or near children it is advisable for him/her to take steps to be in compliance

**Q. 7 Is it necessary to have youth under 18 years of age complete application forms, employment forms, and state screening forms?**

A. No. The completion of the application and screening forms pertaining to child abuse will be pertinent only to those who are 18 years of age or older. But schools, parishes, and agencies that have youth under 18 years of age, or who are still in high school, who are going to interact with or near minors on a regular basis, must have these young people sign the Code of Ethical Conduct for Students Volunteering or Working with Minors.

**Q. 8 Individuals frequently volunteer in a variety of different programs within a parish as well as volunteering in Archdiocesan programs in more than one parish. Is it necessary to complete volunteer forms, employment forms, and State screening forms each time individual volunteers for a program?**

A. Yes. Volunteers must complete all the required paperwork at each location in which they will participate in activities. The on-site, live Protecting God's Children training will not have to be repeated per location.

**Q. 9 What steps should a SPA take in regard to screening individuals who work in the school and have regular contact with children but are employed by a third party contractor (child care program, food service, maintenance firm, etc.)?**

A. The responsibility for screening these employees rests with the employer of these individuals, not with the administrator of the school, parish or agency. The SPA administrator is only responsible to determine that the firm undertakes the screening available through the Missouri State Highway Patrol or FCSR at the appropriate time. Administrators should require the firm to provide evidence that such a screening has occurred. Third party contractors do need to sign the Code of Ethical Conduct for Third Party Contracts. Third party contractors do not need to attend a Protecting God's Children workshop.

**Q. 10 How does Safe Environment Compliance Relate to CYC Sports Program?**

A. Safe Environment Program (SEP) Requirements for Anyone Who Volunteers in a CYC Sports Program Anyone who wants to be a coach or volunteer in any capacity for a Catholic Youth Council sports program must be in compliance with the requirements of the Archdiocese's Safe Environment Program, in addition to any mandated CYC requirements. For those **18 years or older and out of high school** SEP compliance includes:

1. Attending a Protecting God's Children Workshop;
2. Having a background check, updated in even-numbered years;
3. Signing the Archdiocese of St. Louis Code of Ethical Conduct for Clergy, Employees and Volunteers working with Minors.

Note: if someone is going to be a head coach or manager he/she must also attend the CYC Coaches Training Program. This is a CYC, not a SEP requirement.

Information about steps 1-3 is available at the office of the parish where the volunteer will be working or from the parish director of the athletic program

The above requirements are the same for Catholic and non-Catholic CYC volunteers. All CYC SEP compliance information is kept at the parish level.

Athletic coordinators at the parish level must submit an authorization form, listing all volunteers and their compliance to the above-listed activities, to their district office at the agreed upon date. The form must be signed by the pastor, child safety coordinator, or the pastor's designee. This information also needs to be shared with the parish's child safety coordinator.

The CYC requires that rosters of names of all CYC sports volunteers are sent to the district office and the CYC Office on the Coach/Roster Authorization Form.

Coaches and other volunteers with non-Catholic schools that participate in CYC games must follow the above-mentioned steps. Their compliance information is received from and kept at the governing body for their institution.

CYC volunteers **under the age of 18, or still in high school**, must do the following:

1. Sign the Code of Ethical Conduct for Students

**Q. 11 What is the minimum age for someone to serve as the lead chaperone at an event involving children or youth?**

**A.** A lead chaperone at any event involving children or youth must be at least 21 years old, and in full compliance with requirements of the Safe Environment Program. The determination of his/her suitability to serve as lead chaperone is the responsibility of the SPA sponsoring the event.

**Q. 12 Who should complete the forms for consolidated elementary schools?**

**A.** Principals of consolidated elementary schools which have multiple sponsoring parishes, should complete the forms for employees and volunteers that work in their school. The designated pastor for that school should be the one who signs the State form and the State form should be returned to the school where they will remain on file. These schools will operate in the same fashion as a high school.

**Q. 13 Who is responsible for completing the forms on the clergy?**

**A.1** Diocesan priests. The Vicar for Priests will complete the Request for Child Abuse or Neglect/Criminal Record form for all diocesan priests working in the St. Louis Archdiocese. If a substantiated case of child abuse should be returned, then the parish or agency for which the diocesan priests works will be properly notified.

**A.2** Priests who are members of religious orders. All religious order priests and brothers working as pastors and associate pastors will be cleared by the Catholic Center. All other religious order priests employed by high schools and agencies will be cleared according to those guidelines adopted by the respective school and agency. Members of religious orders who will be assisting at SPA should follow the compliance procedures for Archdiocesan priests, and must submit a letter from a provincial with their order stating that there is nothing in their background that would prevent them from working with minors. Religious order priests assigned to parishes will have their background checks submitted in even numbered years by the Safe Environment Office in conjunction with Priest Personnel.

**A.3** Deacons. The Director, of the Office of the Diaconate will Request for Child Abuse or Neglect/Criminal Record form for all deacons working in the St. Louis Archdiocese. If a substantiated case of child abuse should be returned, then the parish or agency for which the deacon works will be properly notified.

**Q. 14 What must be sent to the Family Care Safety Registry?**

**A.1** Individuals can also register themselves online without submitting a copy of their Social Security Card, although they will need to enter their Social Security number. The cost for self-registration is \$11, payable by a credit card. For more information on the FCSR call the toll free number 1-866-422-6872.

**A.2** All child safety coordinators must register new employees and volunteers on line. This requires the use of a credit card, and the child safety coordinator must retain the FCSR Registration Form as the applicant's waiver and permission to be registered on line.

Child Safety Coordinators also need to download the appropriate forms from the FCSR homepage relative to receiving authorization to conduct online background screenings. Once approved by the registry for online screening the background check process, even for new employees and volunteers, can typically be completed within a day. For more information contact the SEP Office.

**A.3** Background checks are returned to the individual who is being screened as well as to the SPA requesting the screening. When they are returned, they must be retained in a secure location at the SPA.

#### **Q.15 What are the advantages to using the FCSR?**

**A.1** The advantages in using the FCSR instead of the Missouri State Highway Patrol are that there is no charge for subsequent background checks after an individual is registered in the system. Also you can utilize the FCSR website to verify if someone is registered in the system and do subsequent checkups by telephone or fax. The Highway Patrol Registry requires a charge for all subsequent checks.

**A.2** Another advantage to using the FCSR is that the SEP database is set up to generate background check requests electronically through the database. Requests for hundreds of names can be generated in a matter of minutes.

#### **Q. 16 What must be sent to the Missouri State Highway Patrol?**

**A.** The Family Care Safety Registry (FCSR) is the chosen background check process of the Safe Environment Program. **We no longer use the Missouri Highway Patrol form.**

Employees or volunteers who have resided outside of the state of Missouri any time over the last five years will have to undergo a nationwide FBI finger print background check when they enter the Safe Environment Program as well as the FCSR screening. Subsequent checks will be FCSR screenings. If the out-of-state location is Colorado, Florida, Kansas, Illinois, or Texas, the employee or volunteer will only have a background check from that particular state, in addition to the FCSR screening.

#### **Q. 17 Must the pastor sign each Request for Child Abuse or Neglect/Criminal Record form submitted**

**A.** The CSC may sign the form or he/she can use a stamp signature for the pastor.

#### **Q. 18 What information can I expect to receive from the FCSR?**

**A.** The FCSR will either return a form letter indicating that there is no criminal history for the individual in question, or they will return a form letter indicating a criminal record along with specific information as to the nature and disposition of the offense. Records checked by the FCSR include the Missouri Highway Patrol, the Missouri Sex Offender Registry, and child abuse/neglect records by the Missouri Dept. of Social Services.

#### **Q. 19 What guidelines should be followed in evaluating an employee/volunteer's violation record returned from FCSR?**

**A.** Below are some guidelines that serve to assist employers in the Archdiocese in that evaluation process.

The following types of violations would generally be considered minor unless a number



and variety of these violations indicate a serious problem:

- traffic (driving) violations
- shoplifting

The following violations would generally be considered serious and would eliminate the individual from consideration for a position working with children:

- any felony conviction
- sexual misconduct
- illegal possession of a weapon
- possession or use of a controlled substance
- burglary
- breaking and entering
- assault

If a parish has questions about the suitability of a potential employee or volunteer due to the background report information the safety coordinator should call the Safe Environment Office at 314.792.7271.

#### **Q.20 What does “accused of child abuse” mean?**

**A.** “Accused of child abuse” means that the police or Division of Family Services has conducted an investigation as a result of a registered formal complaint. It does not mean accusations or charges that an individual may have made against another individual at some point in the past. Information that is presented on this form is intended for the use of the pastor and these forms are to be returned to the parish rectory. Any further discussion of these answers will be between the pastor and the volunteer or employee.

#### **Q. 21 When should the term “unacceptable” be applied to an individual’s record in the SEP database?**

**A.** “Unacceptable” should **only** be used when there is some impediment to the individual’s working with children. It is not synonymous with being out of compliance. An individual would be unacceptable if he/she had a background check returned listing an item mentioned above, or if the person was removed from his child-related activity because of behavior inconsistent with the Code of Ethical Conduct.

#### **Q. 22 How can undocumented workers be allowed to volunteer in schools, parishes and agencies?**

**A.** Undocumented volunteers, who by the nature of their presence in this archdiocese cannot be subject to the same Safe Environment Program-required background checks performed on other adults in this archdiocese, must adhere to the following guidelines if they want to volunteer around children:

Every effort must be made to ensure there is no documentation for the individual. If the individual claims to have no documentation when he/she really does, he/she must stop volunteering immediately.

There must be a waiting period of six months after the initial request to volunteer before the individual can begin to volunteer

The volunteer service must be performed in tandem with another adult who is in full compliance with the Safe Environment Program

There must be two or more local character references, not from the same family.

Both other components of Safe Environment Program compliance – the Protecting God’s Children workshop and the reading and signing of the Code of Ethical Conduct – must be completed.

**Q. 23 Are there guidelines for registered sex offenders' participation at Mass?**

**A.1** Certainly no one should ever be denied participation in liturgy but a few precautions are in order. The registered sex offender is strongly encouraged to attend a service that is not a crowded, family Mass. In the discretion of the Pastor, an usher may be alerted to the individual's presence.

**A.2** The individual may not participate in any special role in the Mass or in any parish ministry. Such participation would likely result in the ability for the individual to have contact with minors and/or could put the individual in a position where he/she could develop a relationship of trust with minors.

If you have any other questions about this situation contact the Safe Environment Office at 314.792.7271.

**Q. 24 Are there guidelines for sex offenders' participation in school or parish events for minors?**

**A.1** The decision of whether to allow a person who is a registered sex offender, or who is otherwise known to be a sex offender, to enter parish property shall be made by the Pastor or his delegate(s). The decision of whether to allow a person who is a registered sex offender, or who is otherwise known to be a sex offender, to enter an archdiocesan high school shall be made by the Chief School Administrator.

**A.2** If a person who is a registered sex offender, or who is otherwise known to be a sex offender, has a close relative (e.g. child, step-child, grandchild, sibling, niece or nephew) in a Catholic school or Catholic parish-related program, he/she may be allowed to attend activities or programs for that close relative (e.g. parent-teacher conferences, athletic events, school plays) provided that the individual agrees to abide by the "**Parish School Safety Plan For the Protection of Minors**" or the "**High School Safety Plan For the Protection of Students,**" as appropriate

**A.3** The "**Parish School Safety Plan for the Protection of Minors**" requires that the individual must always be accompanied by one or more adults (Accompanying Adult) who must be identified to and approved by the Pastor or his delegate(s). Accompanying Adults should also be made known to the head of the school or activity the individual may want to attend.

**A.4** The "**High School Safety Plan for the Protection of Students**" requires that the individual must always be accompanied by one or more adults (Accompanying Adults) who must be identified to and approved by the Chief School Administrator.

**A.5** Violation of a safety plan could result in the individual being banned from attending future activities.

**A.6** **A sex offender may not hold a volunteer or employee position at a parish or school and has a responsibility to make himself/herself known to the Pastor (or his delegated Associate Pastor or Deacon) or to the Chief School Administrator if attending parish or school events.** (*Reference: Parish School Safety Plan for the Protection of Minors and High School Safety Plan for the Protection of Students*)

Call the Safe Environment Office at 314.792.7271 for further information.

Reference: Policy on sex offenders attending Mass

**Q. 25 What precautions are taken to ensure the privacy and security of information provided for the background check?**

**A.** Maintaining privacy and confidentiality is vitally important in the background check process. Only individuals with special clearance can view the SEP database.

**Q. 26 Does each parish keep these forms confidential?**

A. It is very important that each parish keeps answers to the questions on the employee and volunteer application forms, as well as responses from the Division of Family Services, confidential. In order to best assure this happening, parish volunteers and employees should submit the completed forms to the rectory where these responses will be kept in a confidential file under the control of the pastor.

**Q. 27 What does a school, parish, or agency do if they have a substantiated case of child abuse?**

A. Notify the Receiver of the Report as outlined in the Child Abuse Manual to discuss appropriate steps.

**Q. 28 How does an SPA get additional employment application forms, volunteer forms, and State screening forms?**

A. Copies can be made locally by each SPA and forms are available from the Safe Environment Program website at <http://www.archstl.org/sep>.

**Q. 29. If an applicant has moved to Missouri from another state how do I conduct a background check?**

A. Employees or volunteers who have resided outside of the state of Missouri any time over the last five years will have to undergo a nationwide FBI finger print background check and/or alternate out of state background checks through American Checked, Inc.

**Q. 30 If I have further questions, where do I turn?**

A. Please feel free to call the following individuals:

Director of the Safe Environment Program (SEP questions) 314.721.7271

Coordinator of Training (SEP questions) 314-792-7273

Coordinator of Compliance (SEP questions) 314-792-7273

Stephanie Welling (Archdiocesan High School questions) 314.792.7306

**Q. 31 What is the Job Description for the Child Safety Coordinator?**

**A. Basic Qualifications**

The Child Safety Coordinator should be:

- Organized
- Able to take and follow directions
- Demonstrate the ability to complete assignments thoroughly and efficiently
- Able to communicate with archdiocesan personnel, employees and volunteers
- Able to access a computer with Internet access
- Given strong support by his/her pastor

**Responsibilities**

The Child Safety Coordinator will:

- Coordinate the scheduling of the *Protecting God's Children* program with the Archdiocesan coordinator of the program.
- Oversee and verify the attendance of all employees and volunteers of the parish/school/agency required to attend the *Protecting God's Children* program.
- Distribute and monitor the distribution, signing, and filing of the *Archdiocesan Code of Ethical Conduct* to be read and signed by all religious, employees, and volunteers of the parish/school/agency
- Ensure that all employees and volunteers who work with children/youth on a regular basis have been screened using the Name search process.

The job of the Child Safety Coordinator is very challenging and requires the full support of the pastor and of all the heads of any youth ministries in the parish. Any questions related to this job description should be directed to the Archdiocesan Director of the Safe Environment Program at 314.792.7271.

## **V. Child Abuse Resources**

**•Printed Material•**

**•Presentations•**

## PRINTED MATERIALS ON CHILD ABUSE

### Readings for Parents and Educators

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#### **Walk in the Light; A Pastoral Response to Child Sexual Abuse**

This is a collaborative statement of the NCCB Committee on Women in Society and in the Church and the NCCB Committee on Marriage and Family. This document seeks to bring the tragedy of child sexual abuse into the light, to give people needed information, and to offer the spiritual, sacramental, and social resources of the Church so that the healing process may begin. 1995, United States Catholic Conference. Available through the Catholic Education Office (314-792-7331).

#### **Child Abuse, A Parent's and Teacher's Handbook on Identifying and Preventing Child Abuse**, Dr. James A. Monteleone, G. W. Medical Publishing, Inc. 1998, 1-800-600-0330.

This book offers a complete look at the issue of child abuse from a layman's approach. It arms parents and teachers with strategies to ward off abuses, outlines the physical and behavioral clues indicative of abuse and explains how to use the justice system to stop it.

#### **Recognition of Child Abuse for the Mandated Reporter**, Angelo P Giardino and Eileen R. Giardino, G. W. Medical Publishing, Inc. 2002, 1-800-600-0300.

This practical reference helps professionals fulfill their legal and ethical responsibilities to report child abuse with a high level of confidence, effectiveness and gratification.

#### **Touch and Sexual Abuse: How to Talk to Your Children**,

ETR Associates, 1-800-321-4407.

A pamphlet for parents in helping them understand the problem of sexual abuse, what to let children know, verbal and non-verbal messages to consider, and what to do if you suspect your child may be a victim.

**The following materials for parents and educators are available through Prevent Child Abuse America, 1-800-835-2671:**

#### **An Approach to Preventing Child Abuse**, Anne H. Cohn

This booklet, written with professionals, volunteers, and civic leaders in mind, presents NCPA's official model for community action to prevent child abuse. It reviews and extensively documents what is known about the causes and prevention of child abuse, including ethnic and cultural influences. (702050)

#### **Think You Know Something about Child Abuse?**

This brochure answers 22 basic and important questions that many people ask about child abuse. (702472)

#### **Educators, Schools, and Child Abuse**, Diane Broadhurst

With the information in this booklet, both administrators and teachers have the information they need to help protect children—from setting policies to following through with the family. Of all groups, educators can make the most difference in child abuse prevention; this booklet tells how. (702209)

#### **Talking about Child Sexual Abuse**, Cornelia Spelman

In this pamphlet the author answers critical questions about child sexual abuse as she attempts to give readers both the big picture of child sexual abuse and specific strategies for preventing it. (702324)

#### **Reporting Child Abuse, It's everyone's responsibility**, A Scriptographic publication

People not only need to know why they should report suspected cases of child abuse, they also need to know how. This booklet helps everyone recognize the signs of different types of abuse, guides them in filing a report and explains what happens after the report. It also discusses mandated reporters and abuse prevention. (72943)

#### **Putting a Stop to Child Abuse**, A Scriptographic publication

Describe the four types of child abuse, what be done to help prevent it, warning signs and the tragic toll abuse takes on a child's life. This booklet offers an insightful portrayal of abuse parents; emphasizes responsibility to report suspected cases and tells where help can be found. (42887)

**Emotional Neglect: Being Hurt by What Is Not There**, Jon Korfmacher

Prepares readers to prevent a form of abuse that can cause as much pain as any physical abuse. Clearly describes different forms of emotional neglect, how children at different ages, exhibit signs of emotional neglect, why some parents fail to meet their child's needs for loving attention, and forms of help that are available for all family members. (705475)

**It Shouldn't Hurt to be a Child,**

An excellent general purpose overview of child abuse. This booklet covers causes, symptoms, and legal issues surrounding child abuse, and explains how people can volunteer to assist abused children and their families. Also directs parents to sources of help. (702464)

**Basic Facts about Child Sexual Abuse**

Answers key questions about child sexual abuse and describes physical , behavioral and conversational symptoms a sexually abused child might present. Includes a discussion about factors that contribute to incestuous behavior. An excellent general information resource. (702480)

**Readings For Children**

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**Touch Talk (K-2) Stop It (Grade 3-4)**

ETR Publications, 1-800-321-4407.

Educate elementary-age students about the difference between good and bad touches. These 16-page booklets broach the subject of inappropriate touch with children, and feature cartoon illustrations and simple language. Designed to be read by children with a caring adult.

**My Body Belongs to Me**, A Scriptographic publication,

Prevent Child Abuse America; 1-800-835-2671

As Mother Teddy Bear teaches her children about boundaries, young children learn that their bodies are their own, how they can protect themselves against an unwelcome touch, and the importance of telling an adult if they've been touched in a way that makes them feel unsafe. Demonstrates role-playing and addresses a variety of situations in which children might experience wanted and unwanted touch.

**You're In Charge**; A Coloring and Activities Book; (primary grades)

Prevent Child Abuse America; 1-800-835-2671.

This publication assists children to understand when the behavior of others is inappropriate and tells them what to do in case of abuse or attempted abuse.

**Physical Abuse is Never O.K.**; A Coloring and Activities Book (primary grades)

Prevent Child Abuse America; 1-800-835-2671.

Tells in simple terms what physical abuse is. Urges youngsters to seek out a trusted adult to get help for an abusive situation.

**PRESENTATIONS**

1. **Virtus ® Protecting God's Children Workshop**

The Archdiocese of St. Louis conducts a child sexual-abuse prevention program entitled "Protecting God's Children." The program is provided at no cost to parishes, schools, and archdiocesan agencies. All employees and volunteers who work with or near children on a regular basis are mandated to attend a presentation of the program. Priests in the archdiocese participated in the program at-deanery meetings, and pastors are encouraged to be present at the sessions that will be offered in their parishes.

After reviewing several programs on the prevention of sexual abuse, the Archdiocesan Child Safety Committee recommended "Protecting God's Children" to Archbishop Justin Rigali. Developed by National Catholic Services, this comprehensive two and a half hour program includes two video presentations that incorporate stories from victims of

sexual abuse and their families, who talk about the impact that the abuse has had on them. In addition, the videos feature testimony from perpetrators of child abuse, who tell with chilling candor how they selected their victims and how they made the victims feel that the abuse was their own fault. The program also provides information on how to prevent situations that can lead to abuse, on what behavior should raise concern about abuse, and on how to report abuse.

Approximately 20 local facilitators, comprising counselors, psychologists, social workers, and educators, have been trained to present the program. Most presentations are given at parishes.

Effective in 2007 pastors were asked to identify a parishioner who can be trained to become a workshop facilitator for his/her parish community.

To arrange a presentation, contact the child safety coordinator at your parish. If you have questions, please contact Ms. Andrea Witt—Coordinator of Training for the Safe Environment Program, at 314.792.7272 or [andrewitt@archstl.org](mailto:andrewitt@archstl.org).

A listing of currently scheduled presentations can be found on the Internet at [http://www.archstl.org/sep/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=59&Itemid=188](http://www.archstl.org/sep/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=59&Itemid=188)

## **2. Safe Environment -Program for Children and Youth**

K-8<sup>th</sup> Grade Curriculum has been developed by West County Psychological

9 -12th Grade, Called to Protect for Youth, developed by Praesidium

### **1. Safe Environment-Program for Parents:**

Parents will be invited to preview and review the Safe Environment Program for Children and Youth and this can be the optional parent training