



Archdiocese of Hartford
Office of Safe Environment
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August 22, 2018

Greetings to all the Faithful of the Archdiocese of Hartford:

I want to take this opportunity to make you aware of the effort and education that the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Hartford has implemented to keep our children safe.

First, on behalf of the Office of Safe Environment, and as the Victim Assistance Coordinator, I want to extend my heartfelt apologies and my prayers to anyone who has been abused in the past by any personnel of the Archdiocese of Hartford, be they an employee, volunteer, religious or clergy.

The Diocesan Safe Environment Office was created by the Archdiocese in 2002 with the mission of preventing the crime of sexual abuse. I serve as full-time Director assisted by four staff members.

In 2002, the Bishops of the United States met in Dallas, Texas, and drafted the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, sometimes referred to as “The Dallas Charter.” It has come to be understood that whenever the word “minor” appears in the *Charter*, the same protections and protocols now cover “vulnerable adults” as well. “Vulnerable adult” is defined as “a person who is at least 18 years of age with an intellectual disability.” The *Charter* has undergone revisions over time and has also been complemented by *Norms* approved by the Vatican which have the force of law in the Church.

We expect our clergy, as well as men and women religious, employees, teachers, catechists, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, coaches, youth ministers, volunteers and others throughout the diocese to help create and uphold a culture that will not tolerate abuse and that values continuous training. In the spirit of public awareness and ongoing vigilance, please read about the full breadth of programs run by our Office of Safe Environment to educate and protect the faithful, and promote healing and reconciliation at www.archdioceseofhartford.org under the “Protection of Youth” tab.

Audits are completed on a yearly basis by an independent, unbiased entity. Since 2003, the Archdiocese of Hartford has voluntarily submitted records and data. The audits are completed by paper every two years, and an onsite audit is completed every third year. **Since the first audit, the Archdiocese of Hartford has always been found to be in compliance with the Charter.** In addition to these *Charter* audits, the Office of Safe Environment completes its own internal audits reaching each parish/school every three to four years.

Our ongoing goal is simple yet challenging: to do everything humanly possible to address past acts of sexual abuse and to protect minors and vulnerable adults from sexual abuse now and in the future. Our archdiocesan policy is “zero tolerance of sexual abuse” with clearly defined legal and pastoral consequences for offenders should sexual abuse of any form take place. We cannot be too careful when it comes to potential sexual abuse, not just by clergy, but all potential abusers.

What does the Archdiocese of Hartford do?

Children's Training

The Archdiocese makes use of the *Think First, Stay Safe – Child and Teen Lures Prevention* program for training all of our children in grades one through ten in our parish religious education classes, and in grades one through twelve in our Catholic schools. It should be noted that parents, as first educators of their children, are afforded the opportunity to have their children opt out of these trainings if they so wish. The *Child Lures Prevention* training is grade and age appropriate. The program introduces grade/age appropriate “lures” which predators have been known to use in order to gain access to a child. The Archdiocese of Hartford goes above and beyond what other dioceses are requiring for the children's training, in that we require that every child, every grade, every year, be presented with this training program. **The numbers submitted to the 2017 audit indicate that 34,525 students in the Archdiocese have attended a *Child Lures Prevention* class.**

Adult Training

In the Archdiocese of Hartford **it is required that all clergy, seminarians, archdiocesan employees, parish employees, and school employees**, regardless of their positions, attend a sexual abuse prevention workshop that has been approved and offered by a Roman Catholic Diocese. **All volunteers** who have contact with minors or vulnerable adults, or who are in leadership roles, must also attend the trainings.

For this purpose, the program **Virtus: Protecting God's Children for Adults** has been mandated for use in the Archdiocese of Hartford. Over the past 14 years, this training has been offered in our parishes and schools on an average of **181** times a year. Presently, there are over **90** facilitators throughout the Archdiocese who commit to a two-day facilitator training, and then volunteer their time and talent to present this training. As a way of continuing education, all priests, deacons, principals, parish catechetical leaders, and **Virtus** facilitators are responsible for reading a monthly bulletin online provided by **Virtus**. These bulletins are made available to all staff in our schools and religious instructors in our parishes.

2017 audit figures for the Archdiocese of Hartford indicate that almost 20,000 adult personnel have attended sexual abuse awareness and prevention training.

Background Checks

The Archdiocese of Hartford conducts mandatory background checks and sexual abuse awareness training for all personnel who come in contact with a minor or vulnerable adult. We willingly comply with an annual audit overseen by an independent, unbiased entity. **Audit figures show that almost 20,000 priests, deacons, candidates for ordination, educators, employees, and parish volunteers were in compliance as having attended training and a background check.**

The Archdiocese requires that all employees of any Catholic school must submit:

- fingerprint background checks for both Connecticut and FBI criminal files
- a records check of the DCF child abuse and neglect registry

Clergy, religious, archdiocesan employees, and parish employees must submit a background check which covers:

- State and national criminal files
- Social Security number verification
- National Sex Offender Registry

All volunteers with contact with minors or vulnerable adults must submit a background check which covers:

- State and national criminal files
- Social Security number verification
- National Sex Offender Registry

It is **mandatory** that all background checks **be re-submitted every ten years**, or if a personnel leaves ministry for more than one year. Personnel are also required to promptly self-report any convictions involving criminal and/or motor vehicle matters, current or pending.

Any personnel found to have a criminal conviction of the following, will be barred forever from employment or volunteering in any entities of the Hartford Roman Catholic Diocesan Corporation, its parishes and schools:

- Any Sexual Offense Involving a minor (felony or misdemeanor) (One incident)
- Felonies of a Sexual Nature (e.g., rape, sexual assault, etc.) (One incident)
- Felonies of Physically Violent Nature (One Incident)

Review Board

The Archdiocese of Hartford Review Board functions as a confidential consultative body to the Archbishop and advises him in the assessment of allegations of sexual abuse. The chair is a retired attorney in the Superior Court for Juvenile Matters who represented children who have been victimized by sexual assault. The Vice-Chairperson, is a religious sister, with a background in Elementary, Special Education, and Educational Psychology. The third member is Board Certified in Psychiatry and Addiction Medicine. The fourth member is a doctor in private practice in Family Medicine. The fifth member is a priest who is Pastor of a large parish with a Catholic elementary school. Other diocesan officials attend the meetings as required. This board meets whenever an allegation is received, and a minimum of two times a year even in the absence of allegations.

In conclusion, let me say that I often encounter people in the Archdiocese who struggle with being “told” that they must attend the Safe Environment training. Please realize that this training is mandated by the U.S. Bishops and their *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* as a necessary safeguard to prevent the crime of sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults.

If you have questions regarding the Office of Safe Environment, please never hesitate to call me. And if you or someone you know was a victim of sexual abuse by personnel of the Archdiocese of Hartford, I encourage you to contact me. I can be reached at **860-541-6475**.

Sincerely,



Kathleen D. Nowosadko
Director of Safe Environment
Victim Assistance Coordinator

HOW TO REPORT AN INCIDENT OF SEXUAL ABUSE TO THE ARCHDIOCESE OF HARTFORD

If you have knowledge or suspect that a minor or vulnerable adult (an adult with an intellectual disability) has been sexually abused, in any manner, by personnel of the Archdiocese of Hartford, you are urged to report this information to:

Kathleen D. Nowosadko
Victim Assistance Coordinator
860-541-6475
kathleen.nowosadko@aoht.org

In addition, you will be asked to follow up in writing with a detailed description of the facts involved in the incident. Specifics of this written report can be found in the [Policies and Procedures of the Archdiocese of Hartford Relating to Allegations of Sexual Misconduct Involving Minors and Vulnerable Adults](#). This document is also available online at www.archdioceseofhartford.org. The Archdiocese of Hartford will report any and all incidents to the proper civil authorities. Mandated reporters in the State of Connecticut are required by law to report any incident of sexual abuse involving a minor or vulnerable adult. We encourage any Non-Mandated persons to report such incidents to the proper authorities as well. We support your right to do so.

Once a written report of an incident of sexual abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult has been received, an investigation will be undertaken by, or on behalf of, the Archdiocese of Hartford.

CÓMO DENUNCIAR UN INCIDENTE DE ABUSO SEXUAL QUE INVOLUCRE A UN MENOR O ADULTO VULNERABLE EN LA ARQUIDIÓCESIS DE HARTFORD

Si tiene conocimiento o sospecha que un menor o adulto vulnerable (un adulto con discapacidad intelectual) está siendo abusado sexualmente, de cualquier manera, por alguien del personal de la Arquidiócesis de Hartford, debe reportar inmediatamente el incidente a:

Kathleen D. Nowosadko
Coordinadora Asistente de Víctimas
860-541-6475
kathleen.nowosadko@aoht.org

Además, se le pedirá hacer un seguimiento por escrito con una descripción detallada de los hechos involucrados en el incidente. Detalles específicos de este informe por escrito se pueden encontrar en www.archdioceseofhartford.org o en *Policies and procedures of the Archdiocese of Hartford Relating to Allegations of Sexual Misconduct involving Minors and Vulnerable Adults*. La Arquidiócesis de Hartford reportará cualquier y todos los incidentes a las autoridades civiles correspondientes. Por ley el Estado de Connecticut requiere mandatoriamente reportar cualquier incidente de abuso sexual que involucre a un menor o adulto vulnerable (un adulto con discapacidad intelectual). Recomendamos a las personas apropiadas a reportar dichos incidentes. Nosotros apoyamos su derecho para hacerlo.

