

How are people approved to work or volunteer in church parishes and Catholic schools?

All persons seeking employment in a church parish or Catholic school should complete an employment application form. They must be interviewed, provide references, and agree to a criminal background check. Persons who wish to volunteer also must agree to a criminal background check. Only after references have been checked (for employment) and background check results have been received may a person be considered for employment or volunteer service.

What about priests, brothers, or sisters who come to our diocese from another diocese or another country?

Before a priest, deacon, or religious can be assigned for pastoral ministry in this diocese, the bishop must have received from that person's legitimate superior or bishop a curriculum vitae, a statement verifying the cleric is in good standing, that he has never been found guilty of sexual abuse of a minor, and in general is of good moral character.

What about the laws of our state regarding child sexual abuse?

All persons associated with the diocese are expected to comply with all applicable civil laws with respect to the prompt reporting of allegations of sexual abuse of minors to civil authorities, i.e. local law enforcement agency, and cooperate in their investigation. In every instance, the diocese will advise and support a person's right to make a report to public authorities. The diocese will take all appropriate steps to protect the good name and reputation of all persons involved in the process.

Resources

--Prevent Child Abuse – Louisiana: www.pcal.org

--National Center for Missing & Exploited Children: www.missingkids.com

--U. S. Conference of Catholic Bishops - Secretariat
of Child & Youth Protection: www.usccb.org/scyp

--VIRTUS: www.virtus.org

--Diocese of Alexandria: www.diocesealex.org

Safe Environment Office Program Coordinator
Mrs. Pam Aymond Delrie
(318) 445-6424 x 213



**How To Report Sexual Abuse
of a Minor by a Cleric or
Church Worker/Volunteer
of the Diocese of Alexandria**

First call your local law enforcement agency
and/or the

Louisiana Child Abuse Hotline

1-855-452-5437;

then, call the diocesan

Victim Assistance Coordinator,

Dr. Lee Kneipp, Clinical Psychologist:

(318) 542-9805



Sexual abuse of a minor violates human dignity, ministerial commitment and mission of the church.

Policies and procedures designed to provide for the safety of children, the well-being of the community, and the integrity of the church in the Diocese of Alexandria include:

- Engaging the services of a Victims Assistance Coordinator (VAC), Dr. Lee Kneipp, Clinical Psychologist, 318-542-9805
- A safe environment program that requires all clergy, employees and volunteers who work with children to participate in the VIRTUS *Protecting God's Children*™ awareness training program
- Expanded role of the diocesan Permanent Review Board
- Easy availability and accessibility of the Code of Pastoral Conduct and the Diocesan Policy for the Protection of Minors to all employees and volunteers who work with children – whether in hard copy and/or via the diocesan website (www.diocesealex.org).
- The requirement of criminal background checks as part of the application and screening process for employees and volunteers who work with children.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is “sexual abuse awareness” training?

This awareness training, which is required of all clergy, employees and volunteers who work with children, is a comprehensive program to prevent child sexual abuse in our Catholic churches, school and activities. The Diocese of Alexandria uses the VIRTUS *Protecting God's Children*™ program, which is a component of National Catholic Services, Inc. Through an initial 3-hour session, followed by the reading of monthly ongoing-training bulletins, through which clergy, employees, volunteers and concerned adults learn about the nature, extent and impact of child sexual abuse and the five (5) steps necessary to prevent it:

- Know the warning Signs
- Control access through screening
- Monitor all ministries and programs
- Be aware of child and youth behavior
- Communicate your concerns

How do I know if the people in my parish or school have had the training?

You may ask your pastor, school principal, or the diocesan Safe Environment Coordinator (Mrs. Pam Delrie, 318-445-6424 x 213).

What if child sexual abuse occurs at a church parish or at a Catholic school?

Immediately upon reception of a report of abuse, persons appointed by the bishop will offer counsel and assistance to those affected. The Victim Assistance Coordinator (VAC) will ensure that the proper civil authorities have been notified.

At no time will the church interfere in a civil investigation. The Permanent Review Board, a group of committed lay professionals, will ensure that all diocesan policies regarding care of victims and investigations are followed.

Where can I get a copy of the Diocesan Policy for the Protection of Minors and/or the Code of Pastoral Conduct?

You may request a hard copy from the diocesan safe environment office -- or you may view/download them at www.diocesealex.org; click on Safe Environment; then, Downloadable Documents.