



ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA

Renewing Our Commitment to the Protection of Children

October 2012

POLICIES FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE: AN OVERVIEW

As Archbishop Chaput recently said,

“We need to acknowledge our failures of the past in dealing with clergy sexual abuse, and we need to help victims of that abuse to heal. We also need to acknowledge that no entity in the United States today – Catholic or otherwise – seeks more earnestly than the Archdiocese of Philadelphia to prevent abuse and to protect its people. And that commitment will only grow stronger in the years ahead.”

In an effort to better protect children, the Archdiocese has developed new policies and procedures (see attached) since the 2011 Grand Jury Report that address how allegations are received, reported, investigated and reviewed; how victim services are provided and how assignments of extern or religious priests are handled.

Some key changes from past Archdiocesan practices include:

- The creation of a separate Office of Investigations to ensure immediate referral of complaints of abuse to law enforcement. *Cooperation with all appropriate public authorities is mandated, and interference with law enforcement investigations is prohibited.* This new Office, headed by former Philadelphia Deputy District Attorney Al Toczydowski, is staffed with highly experienced former law enforcement personnel and employs trained forensic interviewers, computer imaging, videotaping and other tools to ensure thoroughness and integrity in investigations.
- Every allegation is logged and a file opened. Each allegation against clergy is promptly reviewed to determine whether interim restrictions on ministry should be imposed.
- Referral of *all* complaints that involve minors to the Archdiocesan Review Board. The Review Board is an advisory body made up of Catholics and non-Catholics which reviews completed investigations and makes recommendations to the Archbishop concerning each case.
- In a change from past practice, all complaints against clergy, even those solely involving violations of *The Standards of Ministerial Behavior and Boundaries* are now sent to the

Board. The standard used by the Board to review cases has been clarified and codified. In addition, the Board has been expanded to include a spectrum of people with expertise in sexual assault trauma, victim services and law enforcement.

- The codification of steps to ensure that any cleric from outside the diocese or from a Religious Order seeking to minister in the Archdiocese is screened to guarantee the protection of children.

In addition to the new policies and procedures, the Archdiocese has taken other significant steps over the last year to reform and improve the manner in which it lives up to its duty to protect children:

The Archdiocese has through the Bucks County Network of Victim Assistance provided Mandatory Reporter Training for over 35,000 Archdiocesan employees and volunteers. This training goes above and beyond the requirements of state law and was conducted in an effort to make sure the Archdiocese is creating the safest possible environment for children and young people. Part of creating that environment was helping employees and volunteers understand what it means to be a Mandated Reporter and that all suspected cases of child abuse must be immediately reported.

Note especially that the Archdiocese has drawn a strict division between victim assistance and the investigative process by separating these functions into independent offices. This allows our victim assistance efforts to focus exclusively on the needs of victims. Ms. Leslie Davila was appointed to head those efforts. She comes to us from the Philadelphia District Attorney's office and has more than 15 years of experience in working with victims of crime, including victims of sexual assault.

Archbishop Chaput has also recently said,

"I pray—and I do believe—that the lessons of the last year have made our Church humbler, wiser and a more vigilant guardian of our people's safety. That is our commitment today, tomorrow and permanently."

