

ARCHDIOCESE OF LOS ANGELES
SAFEGUARD THE CHILDREN COMMITTEE
HANDBOOK



*CREATING A CIRCLE OF SAFETY
FOR
OUR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE*

SAFEGUARD THE CHILDREN COMMITTEE HANDBOOK
LETTER OF INTRODUCTION



Archdiocese of Los Angeles

Office of Safeguard the Children
Office: (213) 637-7228
Fax: (213) 637-6681

3424
Wilshire
Boulevard

Los Angeles
California
90010-2241

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Dear Safeguard the Children Committee Chairperson and Members,

It is an honor to write this letter to you. By your participation on the Safeguard the Children Committee, you have pledged to help create a circle of safety for our children and young people that will help protect them from child sexual abuse and other safety issues that might harm their well-being. We are called to be the “eyes, ears and voices of our children, young people and vulnerable adults.”

Since I began coordinating the Safeguard the Children Office in 2004, I have always looked at it as a ministry with a very special call from the Holy Spirit to take action! In the past sixteen years, the ministry has grown and flourished, thanks to the many dedicated clergy, staff and volunteers like you.

I have created the *Safeguard the Children Committee Handbook* to help provide guidance and resources to the Safeguard the Children Committee so you might better understand and fulfill the objectives of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*.

This *Handbook* will help you understand the policies, procedures and requirements of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. It is also a guide for best practices created through the vision, commitment and energy of Committees like yours!

Another invaluable resources for your Committee are the Office of Safeguard the Children website www.archla.org/safeguard and the Archdiocesan Administrative Handbook – Chapter 9: Safe Environment <http://handbook.la-archdiocese.org/chapter-9>. This is where you will find all the latest policies, procedures and resources.

Thank you for your willingness to serve. Together we are making a difference in the lives of our children and young people!

May God bless you and guide you. - Joan Vienna, Director

Pastoral Regions: Our Lady of the Angels San Fernando San Gabriel San Pedro Santa Barbara

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SUMMARY OF THE 17 ARTICLES
CHARTER FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
(6/2002, REVISED 6/2005, 6/2011, 2018)

The vision and successful implementation of the USCCB *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* depends on all of us as “the people of God” working together. This Summary of Articles describes responsibilities of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Archdiocese of Los Angeles and the Parish / School sites.

- **Blue – Parish/School Sites**
- **Black – Diocesan Offices**
- **Burgundy – USCCB Office of Child and Youth Protection**

To Promote Healing Reconciliation with Victims/Survivors of Sexual Abuse of Minors

- Article 1:** Diocese/eparchies are to reach out to victims/survivors and their families and demonstrate a sincere commitment to their spiritual and emotional well-being. The first obligation of the Church with regard to victims is for healing and reconciliation.
- Article 2:** Diocese/eparchies are to have policies and procedures in place to respond promptly to any allegation where there is reason to believe that sexual abuse of a minor has occurred.
- Article 3:** Diocese/eparchies are not to enter into settlements which bind the parties to confidentiality unless the victim/survivor requests confidentiality and this request is noted in the text of the agreement.

To Guarantee an Effective Response to Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors

- Article 4:** Diocese/eparchies are to report an allegation of sexual abuse of a person who is a minor to public authorities. *(Allegations originated at parish/school site are reported immediately to civil authorities and file a copy of the report with the Diocese or eparchy.)
- Article 5:** Diocese/eparchial policy is to provide that every single act of sexual abuse of a minor* -- whenever it occurred -- which is admitted to or established after an appropriate process in accord with Canon Law, the offending priest or deacon is to be permanently removed from ministry and, if warranted, dismissed from the clerical state.
- Article 6:** There are to be clear and well-publicized diocesan/eparchial standards of ministerial behavior and appropriate boundaries for clergy and for any other paid personnel and volunteers of the Church in positions of trust who have regular contact with children and young people.
- Article 7:** Diocese/eparchies are to be open and transparent in communicating with the public about sexual abuse of minors by clergy within the confines of respect for the privacy and reputation of the individuals involved. This is especially so with regard to informing parish and other church communities directly affected by sexual abuse of a minor.

To Ensure the Accountability of Our Procedures

- Article 8:** By the authority of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the mandate of the Ad Hoc Committee on Sexual Abuse is renewed, and it is now constituted the Committee for the Protection of Children and Young People. It becomes a standing committee of the Conference.
- Article 9:** The Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection, established by the Conference of Catholic Bishops, is to staff the Committee on the Protection of Children and Young People and be a resource for diocese/eparchies for the implementation of “safe environment” programs and for suggested training and development of diocesan personnel responsible for child and youth protection programs...”
- Article 10:** The Committee on the Protection of Children and Young People is to be assisted by the National Review Board, a consultative body established in 2002 by the USCCB. The Board will review the annual report of the Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection on the implementation of this Charter in each diocese/eparchy and any recommendations that emerge from it, and offer its own assessment regarding its approval and publication to the Conference President.”
- Article 11:** The President of the Conference is to inform the Holy See of this revised Charter to indicate the manner in which we, the Catholic bishops, together with the Church in the United States, intend to continue our commitment to the protection of children and young people...

To Protect the Faithful in the Future

- Article 12:** Diocese/eparchies are to maintain “safe environment” programs which the diocesan/eparchial bishop deems to be in accord with Catholic moral principles. They are to be conducted cooperatively with parents, civil authorities, educators, and community organizations to provide education and training for children, youth, parents, ministers, educators, volunteers, and others about ways to make and maintain a safe environment for children and young people.
- Article 13:** Diocese/eparchies are to evaluate the background of all incardinated and non-incardinated priests and deacons who are engaged in ecclesiastical ministry in the diocese/eparchy and of all the diocesan/eparchial and parish/school and other paid personnel and volunteers whose duties include ongoing, unsupervised contact with minors. (Fingerprinting at the parish/school level through the Archdiocese.)
- Article 14:** Transfer of clergy who have committed an act of sexual abuse against a minor for residence, including retirement, shall be as in accord with Norm 12 of the *Essential Norms*.
- Article 15:** Diocesan/eparchial bishops and major superiors of clerical institutes or their delegates are to meet periodically to coordinate their roles concerning the issue of allegations made against a cleric member of a religious institute ministering in diocese/eparchy.
- Article 16:** Given the extent of the problem of the sexual abuse of minors in our society, we are willing to cooperate with other churches and ecclesial communities, other religious bodies, institutes of learning, and other interested organizations in conducting research in this area.
- Article 17:** “With renewed urgency, we will promote programs of human formation for chastity and celibacy for both seminarians and priests based upon the criteria found in *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, the *Program of Priestly Formation*,...”



CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION BLESSING

(For Use at Safeguard the Children Committee Meetings.)

Dear Lord,

We ask You to bless us, “Your Holy People.” who have gathered here for our Safeguard the Children Committee Meeting. Open our hearts to Your call to be the “eyes, ears and voice of children and young people everywhere” as You guide us in learning new ways to help prevent child sexual abuse. Grant us the vision and commitment we need to make our homes, churches, schools, communities and world a safer place for all God’s children. We offer our participation in the Safeguard the Children Committee on behalf of all victims of child sexual abuse and pray for their continued healing.

Amen

MANDATED SAFEGUARD THE CHILDREN PARISH COMMITTEE



“Each parish/school site in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles is mandated to have a *Safeguard the Children Committee*. This is not optional.” (September, 2002)

The Safeguard the Children Committee plays a crucial role in assuring that the safeguard initiatives found in the [Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People](#) are a priority. The committee oversees implementation of the Archdiocesan policies and procedures at the location, supports safe environment programs and resources, promotes parish and school site safety, reviews safe environment programs and events at parishes and schools, assists in the annual [United States Conference of Catholic Bishops](#) safe environment audit process, and promotes awareness of April as [National Child Abuse Prevention Month](#).

REQUIRED COMMITTEE MEETINGS

“All Safeguard the Children Committees are required to have a minimum of **two formal meetings a year.**” (July 1, 2009) However, it is highly recommended that the *Committee* meet quarterly using the *Safeguard the Children Committee Handbook* as a guide for creating a three-year child sexual abuse prevention and safety plan.

REQUIRED COMMITTEE MINUTES

Detailed minutes of the two required *Committee* meetings must be recorded each year and signed by the Pastor, Administrator, Parish Life Director or Principal. (July 1, 2009) Copies of the minutes must be kept on file at the parish/school site, and submitted with the annual USCCB Safe Environment Parish or High School Audit Compliance Report.

FORMING THE COMMITTEE

The *Committee* consists of caring adults from both the parish and/or school working together to surround our children and young people with circle a of safety by insuring that the safe environment programs, policies and procedures are being implemented in our parishes, schools and communities. Each *Safeguard the Children Committee* will differ in its membership and size depending on whether there is elementary, pre-school, or in some cases, even a high school attached. If a high school is not affiliated with a parish, required to form its own *Committee*. It is the mission of each *Committee* is to reflect the safety needs of the children and youth at the site.

SELECTING THE COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON: The Pastor/Administrator/Parish Life Director, High School Principal or other person in charge of the location is responsible for appointing the Safeguard the Children Committee Chairperson. The chairperson should be a volunteer of the parish or school community and not an employee of the parish or school. This is important because they:

- **Bring a new perspective and energy from the parish/school community.**
- **Protect staff members from becoming overburdened.**
- **Keep everyone accountable.**

REQUIRED STAFF COMMITTEE MEMBERS: The staff of the parish/school are the ones in authority and therefore responsible for implementing the Archdiocese of Los Angeles Safe Environment policies, procedures and guidelines. Their cooperation and support are necessary in order to implement the ideas of the Committee, e.g.: education opportunities, site evaluations and new resource development. Staff members should include any of the following positions that apply:

- **Pastor/Administrator/Parish Life Director or Pastoral Associate**
- **Principal and/or Vice-Principal**
- **Director of Religious Education**
- **Confirmation Coordinator**
- **Youth Minister**
- **Pre-School Coordinator**

SELECTING VOLUNTEER COMMITTEE MEMBERS: The *Committee* is also required to have volunteers that represent the children and youth in the parish and/or school community. It is also helpful to have community members who have expertise in the area of child abuse prevention, such as:

- **Parent representatives from the Catholic School, Religious Education or Confirmation Program or Youth Ministry Group**
- **Representatives from various cultural groups in the parish**
- **A representative from the Parish Council**
- **Adults from the parish community such as a therapist, law enforcement, nurse, social worker, etc.**
- **VIRTUS® Facilitator(s)**

OFFICE OF SAFEGUARD THE CHILDREN CONTACT INFORMATION

Joan Vienna, Coordinator

Office of Safeguard the Children, Archdiocese of Los Angeles at:

jvienna@la-archdiocese.org

(213) 637-7227

“AT A GLANCE”
SAFEGUARD THE CHILDREN COMMITTEE
AREAS OF FOCUS

This *Safeguard the Children Committee Handbook* provides six areas of focus. The *Committee* with the guidance of the pastor and chairperson will review these areas and select goals that reflect the needs of the children and young people at their site.



1. Monitor:
Archdiocesan
Policies



2. Educate
Safe Environment
Programs & Resources



3. Review
Parish/School
Programs/Events



4. Celebrate
Child Abuse Prevention
Month(April)



5. Evaluate
Parish/School Site
Safety



6. Assist
USCCB Safe Environment
Pre-Audit & Audit Process

SAFEGUARD THE CHILDREN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES AND BEST PRACTICES

The following pages provide a list of the responsibilities and best practices to help your Safeguard the Children Committees to establish a Three Year Action Plan that will fulfill its safe environment mission statement.

Step One: Items preceded with blue boxes are USCCB Charter requirements in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. The role of the Committee is to review these items annually to ensure their parish/school is in compliance.

Step Two: The Committee should then study the “best practices” marked with the black boxes to see which of these areas they would like to include in their Plan. They may also wish to add their own ideas to address the specific safe environment needs of their parish/school location.



1. MONITOR: ARCHDIOCESAN POLICIES

The Safeguard the Children Committee plays an important role in ensuring that the Archdiocese of Los Angeles’ policies and procedures are met and that accurate records are being kept on site or recorded on VPIN (Volunteer and Personnel Information Network). The staff members on the Committee are directly responsible for the mandated requirements marked by the blue box.

- 1) Help plan, organize and advertise the fingerprinting dates and locations for all parish/school staff and volunteers who are alone with or who have supervisory control over minors. See Archdiocese of Los Angeles Fingerprinting Requirements.
<http://www.la-archdiocese.org/org/hr/Pages/fingerprinting.aspx> (Article 13)
- 2) Assure that the Archdiocese of Los Angeles Guidelines for Adults Interacting with Minors at Parish/School Activities or Events are reviewed and signed annually. A copy of the signed “Acknowledgement of Receipt” must be filed at the parish/school. <http://www.la-archdiocese.org/org/protecting/safeguard/Pages/policies.aspx> (Article 6)
- 3) Ensure that all staff and volunteers understand the State of California laws <https://www.cde.ca.gov/lr/ss/ap/childabusereportingguide.asp> regarding mandated reporting and Archdiocesan policies and procedures on **how to report child sexual abuse**. A current copy of all necessary hotlines and other critical phone numbers as well as current reporting forms are readily accessible at the parish/school/Religious Education office, etc. (Article 4)
- 4) The Boundary Guidelines for Junior High and High School Volunteers Working with Children or Youth must be signed by student volunteers, including those who are already 18, who work or volunteer with children/youth at a school/parish. They also must receive training on these boundary guidelines before undertaking their ministry in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. (Article 6)
http://handbook.la-archdiocese.org/Handbook%20Resources/boundary_guidelines_and_code_of_conduct_for_middle_and_high_school_youth_working_or_volunteering_with_children_or_youth.pdf
- 5) It is important to run a “Megan’s Law” check on all staff and volunteers, especially those who work or volunteer directly with children or young people. Go to: <http://www.meganslaw.ca.gov> and scroll down to the bottom of the home page to “Enter Megan’s Law Sex Offender Locator Site” and click to enter the information.

COMMITTEE REVIEW NOTES:

2. EDUCATE: SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMS & RESOURCES

The Committee helps to ensure that all adults who work or volunteer, with or around children, have attended the VIRTUS® Adult Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Programs and that all children and young people have received the Teaching Touching Safety training. The Committee also helps educate parents and caring adults through the use of outside speakers and resources.

- 1) Concurrent with beginning any activities in a parish/school, all parish/school volunteers, teachers, staff or other paid personnel, who work in any capacity with or around children, as well as vulnerable adults or special needs persons, will be required to participate in the VIRTUS® Protecting God's Children Awareness Session for Adults. The Committee should help plan ongoing trainings at the parish/school site to make sure everyone has met this requirement. *(Article 12)*

- 2) Re-Certification is required every four years. The options are attending the: 1 ½ hr. VIRTUS® Keeping the Promise Alive or reading VIRTUS® Online Bulletins for 4 years. *(Article 12)*

- 3) All children and young people in any Archdiocesan Catholic School, Religious Education, Confirmation Programs or Youth Ministry Groups must receive annual Safe Environment Training through the VIRTUS® Teaching Touching Safety. All trainings must be recorded on VIRTUS® Online. *(Article 12)*

- 4) Contact your local Police or Sheriff Department for available speakers from their department on topics related to the safety of children and young people. You can also contact your local police or sheriff department or Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) for speakers that help to inform the *Committee* on how child abuse and neglect cases are handled at the local level and how reports are filed and the follow-up procedures. Sponsor special community speakers to address the issue of child sexual abuse, internet safety, etc. <http://lacdcfs.org/contactus/childabuse.html>

- 5) The Committee must be familiar with the *Archdiocesan Administrative Handbook*, which contains all the Safe Environment policies, procedures, training, form, etc.

Chapter 9: Safe Environment / <http://handbook.la-archdiocese.org/chapter-9>

COMMITTEE REVIEW NOTES:



3. REVIEW: PARISH / SCHOOL POLICIES, PROGRAMS & EVENTS

Each parish/school site has many programs and events that take place each year. Many of these are open to the community at large. It is important to review these on a yearly basis and evaluate any safety issues that may arise and establish clear safe environment monitoring policies and procedures for addressing them.

- 1) *Know and monitor all programs at your parish/school site and review them on a regular basis (i.e.: Do you know the leaders of all the programs in your parish that operate when children are present?). Develop a “Parish Program/Ministry Review Sheet.”
- 2) Review procedures for monitoring visitors who come to the site and establish sign-in procedures.
- 3) Review outside organizations that use the parish (i.e.: AA, Rotary Club, Boy Scouts, etc.). Do you monitor outside groups that rent your parish to give lessons to children or young people? See Outside Vender Agreement.
http://handbook.la-archdiocese.org/Handbook%20Resources/outside_user_agreement.pdf
- 4) Have a review committee for any new ministries or activities beginning in the parish.
- 5) Evaluate and monitor any parish/school events such as fiestas, carnivals, Christmas gatherings, etc., to ensure that they provide a safe environment for children and young people who attend.
- 6) *Review parking lot procedures and traffic patterns to ensure safe drop-off and pick-up of children and youth. Be sure to monitor the “Youth Mass” and activities as well; even though we consider them young adults, they are still minors.

COMMITTEE REVIEW NOTES:

**PARISH/SCHOOL REVIEW FORM FOR
PROGRAMS/EVENTS INVOLVING MINORS
(SAMPLE)**

This form must be completed and submitted to the pastor/principal for all new programs/events involving minors that are being recommended for approval at:

(Name of Parish/School)

The review process, which has two objectives: 1) to assure that the program offered is consistent with the mission and goals of the parish/school/ organization; 2) is there adequate supervision for each age group to promote the safest possible environment. Please provide the following information to the pastor/principal for the Approval Committee's review at least ____ months before the proposed start date of the program or event.

Program/Event Name: _____

Sponsor's Name: _____

Contact Phone Number: _____ EMAIL: _____

Program Mission: _____

Target Age Group(s): _____

Number of Expected Participants: _____ Number of Adult Sponsors: _____

Brief Description of Program/Event:

(Please attach any promotion or program materials that will help promote or support this program or event.)

.....
For Committee Use Only:

Date Submitted: _____

Date Approved: _____ **Date Denied:** _____

Notes:



4. CELEBRATE: CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH (APRIL)

Celebrating what we as members of the Catholic Church are doing to help stop child sexual abuse is an important role of the Committee. April is a great month to spread the word that “together we are making a difference” not only in our parishes/schools but also to the surrounding community.

- 1. *Plan to celebrate Child Abuse Prevention Month in April at your parish. (Keeping Kids Safe Resource and Idea Packet distributed to all parishes and Catholic Schools from the Office of Safeguard the Children at the beginning of March.) For more information email: <http://www.la-archdiocese.org/org/protecting/safeguard/Pages/CAPM.aspx>
- 2. *Distribute child abuse safety resources to the parish/school community such as: VIRTUS® Online bulletin articles, brochures from your local police/sheriff department, etc. Post “USCCB Safe Environment” posters in prominent places.
- 3. Feature a “**Did You Know?**” section in your weekly bulletin and/or parish website. List your Safeguard the Children Committee Chair and include the Committee’s mission, goals and activities. Include easy-to-use, approved bulletin announcements that can be found at: <http://www.la-archdiocese.org/org/protecting/>
- 4. Order and display the current year’s “**Working Together to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse**” brochures in the vestibule of the parish and parish office, school and Religious Education Office. Also, distribute the brochures during Child Abuse Prevention month to all parents of school and religious education children. <http://www.la-archdiocese.org/org/protecting/safeguard/Pages/2018-Working-Together.aspx>
- 5. Begin a “**Safeguard the Children Neighborhood Watch**” campaign in your parish community. (Safeguard the Children window plaques are included in Child Abuse Prevention Month Packet distributed annually.)
- 6. **Celebrating “Keep Kids Safe” year round.** Many parishes and schools are contacting the Office of Safeguard the Children for resources for booths and displays that they now have as a part of parish and school events such as:
 - a. Ministry Fairs
 - b. Carnivals and Fiestas
 - c. Back-to-School Nights

Some of the items that are offered free include:

“Working Together to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse” brochures, parent handouts and VIRTUS® Articles, Keep Kids Safe Stickers, Coloring Pages, that can be used at these and other events.

COMMITTEE REVIEW NOTES:

IDEAS FOR CELEBRATING “KEEPING KIDS SAFE” AT PARISHES/SCHOOLS



- Distribute *Working Together to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse* Brochures to all Catholic Schools and Religious Education Parents. <http://www.la-archdiocese.org/org/protecting/safeguard/Pages/2018-Working-Together.aspx>
- Order the “Promise to Protect – Pledge to Heal Posters” and display around the parish vestibule and in the school. <http://www.la-archdiocese.org/org/protecting/safeguard/Documents/Prayer%20Cards%20Order%20Form.pdf>
- During the month of April, distribute the “**Keeping Kids Safe**” Stickers to all the Catholic Schools/Religious Education Children. Decorate bulletin boards and other display areas with the “Keeping Kids Safe” posters or plant a *pinwheel garden with pencil pinwheels* made by the children/youth.
- Have a “Keep Kids Safe” table after every Mass one weekend in April.
- Have a “**Keep Kids Safe**” booth at your annual Fiesta or Carnival. Child Abuse Prevention resources are available from the Office of Safeguard the Children throughout the year! Here are some things you can do:
 - Have a **Safeguard the Children Team** that specifically monitors the safety of minors. <http://www.la-archdiocese.org/org/protecting/safeguard/Pages/CAPM.aspx>
 - Decorate a booth with pinwheels, posters stickers, brochures, etc. <http://www.la-archdiocese.org/org/protecting/safeguard/Pages/CAPM.aspx>
 - Distribute “Keeping Kids Safe” Stickers. <http://www.la-archdiocese.org/org/protecting/safeguard/Documents/Pinwheel%20Sticker%20Order%20Form.pdf>
 - Distribute *Working Together to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse* brochures. <http://www.la-archdiocese.org/org/protecting/safeguard/Pages/2018-Working-Together.aspx>
 - VIRTUS® Bulletins for Parents and Guardians, etc. <http://www.la-archdiocese.org/org/protecting/Pages/VIRTUS-Current-Online-Articles.aspx>
- *St. Alphonsus Church* held a living rosary with children from the school and the Religious Education program praying for the prevention of child abuse as well as for survivors of abuse.
- *St. John the Evangelist* holds a month of activities, including a Walk-a-Thon after the noon Mass. The children also make and distribute pencil pinwheels at the Masses one weekend in April. They also sponsor an Art Contest, Essay Contest.
- *St. Marianna de Paredes* had a “*Keeping Kids Safe*” Free Community Information Fair with community agencies such as the police and fire department participating.



5. EVALUATE: PARISH/SCHOOL SITE SAFETY

Although Safeguard the Children focuses on child abuse prevention, it is also about the safety of our children at all times! The following list is provided to assist the Committee in an annual review and evaluation of the parish/school site from the safe environment perspective.

- 1) Make a list of where all keys are and who has access to them. Recall keys annually and change locks if necessary.
- 2) Note secluded rooms or areas in buildings or on the grounds and secure them.
- 3) Check to make sure all rooms used for children’s classes/activities provide a safe environment by checking the areas for dangerous equipment, broken chairs/tables, safe stair access, trash and storage usage, etc.
- 4) Make signs for “Children Only” bathrooms, play areas, etc. Make sure they are visible and enforce them! Make appropriate signs with safety rules (e.g.: “No children in teacher/staff area,” etc.)
- 5) Check fencing and security on the property to ensure strangers are kept out and children are kept in.
- 6) Review check-in and check-out procedures for all children/young people involved in the Catholic School, Religious Education and Confirmation Programs, Youth Ministry Groups and after - school programs.
- 7) Consider the use of “Visitor” badges to identify adults who have checked in and have permission to be on the premises.
- 8) Evaluate where safety “conveyance cameras” are needed and compile estimates to present to the Finance Committee.
- 9) Review security of all parish/school computers to make sure that proper password and safeguards such as “firewalls” are installed and being used at all times.
- 10) Review parish/school websites and ensure that “parental permission forms” have been obtained for pictures taken at other than public events.
- 11) Contact and meet with your local Police or Sheriff Department to form a collaborative relationship in addressing child sexual abuse issues in the community, exploring available resources and learning more about how reports are filed and the follow-up procedures in the area.

COMMITTEE REVIEW NOTES:



6. Assist: Annual USCCB Safe Environment Pre-Audit & Audit Process

The Safeguard the Children Chairperson and his/her Committee plays an important part in the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Safe Environment Audit Process.

- 1) The Chairperson and Committee may be asked to assist the pastor in completing the annual “USCCB Safe Environment Audit Report” and returning it to the Archdiocese of Los Angeles by the deadline. <http://www.la-archdiocese.org/org/protecting/safeguard/Documents/2018%20USCCB%20Parish%20Audit%20Report.pdf>
- 2) *The Chairperson is to provide a minimum of two sets of Safeguard the Children Parish Committee Meeting Minutes to be included with the completed Report.
- 3) The Chairperson and Committee are also asked to participate in any “onsite” “Safe Environment Pre-Audit” and USCCB audits. (If Chairperson is a volunteer and cannot participate because of work, this requirement is waived. All parish/school staff who are members of *Committee* must attend.)
- 4) The Chairperson and Committee review the location of all parish/school safe environment compliance records to help ensure that they are clearly filed and easily accessible. (i.e.: VIRTUS® “Protecting God’s Children” Certificates, Signature Sheets of “Guidelines for Adults Working and Volunteering with Minors”, Fingerprinting Records verified on VPIN, Children’s Training recorded on VIRTUS® Online, Parent Opt-Out Forms, etc.).

COMMITTEE REVIEW NOTES:

DEVELOPING A MISSION STATEMENT

It is critical that every Safeguard the Children Committee have its own Mission Statement and develop a Three-Year Plan that will enable the Committee to have clear goals for fulfilling the “Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People” and ensuring a safe environment for the children and youth.

What are we here to do? If you can’t answer that question, you can’t lead people. This is why a clearly articulated mission statement is crucial to your Safeguard the Children Committee. The lack of a clear mission statement often results in organizational drift, resource drain, and missional apathy. So spending some time thinking about your mission – and articulating it clearly – is important.

A clear mission statement tells people about:

Our VISION and *what we root for*

Our MISSION and *what we shoot for*

Following are a few ideas that I have used for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles to express the Office of Safeguard the Children vision and mission.

We as the people of God, are called to form a community of caring adults working together to prevent child sexual abuse. We pledge to be the **“eyes, ears and voice of children and young people”** everywhere.

We are committed to the vision of creating a safe environment for the children and young people in our parishes, schools, homes and communities as we pledge to continue learning new ways of preventing child sexual abuse.

“Together We Are Making a Difference!”

Each parish/school site needs to create their “vision statements” to give people *something to root for* – a picture of the future we hope to see as God gives success to our efforts. In summary, a good mission statement should:

- 1) Clearly answer the question “what are we here for?”
- 2) Be short, clear, precise and measureable.
- 3) Give focus to our efforts; and be specific enough to help us measure success or failure.
- 4) Is it memorable, does your Committee know it and can they repeat it?
- 5) Is there something you need to rethink, change or adapt?

WRITE YOUR SAFEGUARD THE CHILDREN COMMITTEE MISSION STATEMENT

YEAR TWO: JULY 1 – JUNE 30, _____ :

- ***REQUIREMENTS TO BE FULFILLED / TARGET DATE:** _____

- **BEST PRACTICES TO BE ACCOMPLISHED / TARGET DATE:** _____

- **COMMITTEE IDEAS & GOALS FOR THE YEAR/ TARGET DATE:** _____

- **COMMITTEE YEAR END EVALUATION:**

YEAR THREE: JULY 1 – JUNE 30, _____ :

- ***REQUIREMENTS TO BE FULFILLED / TARGET DATE:** _____

- **BEST PRACTICES TO BE ACCOMPLISHED / TARGET DATE:** _____

- **COMMITTEE IDEAS & GOALS FOR THE YEAR/ TARGET DATE:** _____

- **COMMITTEE YEAR END EVALUATION:**

