



**Diocese of Worcester**  
Office of the Bishop  
49 Elm Street  
Worcester, Massachusetts 01609

May 23, 2011

Dear Monsignor/Father,

Last week, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops held a press conference at which it received the landmark report from the John Jay College of Criminal Justice called "Causes and Context of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests in the United States, 1950-2010." There are many things which we are learning from this massive study but one thing is certain: the protections which have been put in place since the implementation of the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* have made a dramatic impact. The annual national audit also echoes that conclusion.

This issue does not go away. This report shows that vigilance is making a difference because sexual misconduct is first and foremost a crime of opportunity. What we are learning as a church will ultimately benefit all of society in combating this horrific crime.

As the Diocese of Worcester prepares for its annual audit by an independent investigative firm contracted by the national Office for Child and Youth Protection, I must stress that one particular concern in that audit is whether parishes are meeting their parochial obligations: screening the backgrounds of volunteers and employees, offering safe environment education to parents and children in our religious education programs or parish schools, and keeping appropriate files to accurately track such information.

I cannot stress how important this is to our diocese. One parish's failure to pass the audit is a failure for our entire diocese and will reflect poorly on the tremendous efforts all of us have made in our parishes, in our schools, and in our diocesan programs to comply with both the letter and the spirit of the *Charter*.

In order to prepare the audit, I have asked the following staff people to gather and review the information: Ray Delisle as Vice Chancellor of Operations will oversee the process as he has assumed responsibility for the audit with the national office. He will be working with Frances Nugent, our Victims' Assistance Coordinator and Elizabeth Marcil, Director of the Office of Religious Education, which recently sent you the annual questionnaire that complements this form with statistical information. In addition to gathering necessary information for the audit, the staff will make a report to our Diocesan Review Committee.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact any of the staff people listed above. While there is never a good time to do this, we decided to wait until the end of the Easter Season and before the summer holidays begin. I suggest you review the materials in the coming weeks with any available staff or volunteers so that this simple form can be completed and returned no later than Thursday, June 23 by fax or mail.

Please join me in prayer for the protection of all children and youth in our care and for the healing that is so needed among all victims of sexual abuse.

With prayerful best wishes, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ *Robert J. McManus*  
Most Rev. Robert J. McManus, S.T.D.  
Bishop of Worcester

Attachment



**A Parish Self-Assessment Guide**  
**Adapted for the Diocese of Worcester**

*Charter for the Protection of Children  
and Young People*

Office of Healing and Prevention  
Diocese of Worcester  
49 Elm Street  
Worcester, MA 01609  
508-791-7171

## Purpose and Overview

Since on-site audits occur every three years, the Office of Healing and Prevention along with the Bishop's Office have determined that it would be beneficial to use a parish self assessment guide to determine what extent our parishes and schools are implementing the diocesan policies relating to the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* at the parish level. This self-assessment can be used by staff to determine if all diocesan policies are being followed as well as help determine where there might be a need for more training in the implementation of the *Charter*.

For the *Charter* to be effective and the audit a tool for creating safe environments, it is important that parish personnel know:

- How to create safe environments in their parishes and schools
- How to implement diocesan policies concerning training of all employees and volunteers
- How to implement diocesan policies concerning background evaluations of employees and volunteers who work with children
- How to implement the diocesan policy on extern/visiting priests
- The name of the people responsible for the implementation of the *Charter* at the parish level and at the diocesan level
- Who schedules safe environment training for adults
- Who is responsible for education of children and parents
- How to report allegations and to whom
- How to get outreach for a victim, his/her family, or the parish community

This self-assessment guide is intended as an internal document solely for the use of the diocese. It will assist all of us in knowing how well prepared we are in having an on-site audit in the future.

NAME OF PARISH AND TOWN: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Is the existence of the diocesan policies and procedures relating to the *Charter* publicized to parishioners? (Ref.: The national standard is a listing in the bulletin the first Sunday of every month.)

YES  NO

- **If Yes, describe the types and frequency of publications.** (Examples might include publication in parish bulletins, information provided at Masses, brochures and/or posters in the vestibules of Church buildings.) \_\_\_\_\_

- **If No, provide explanation.**

2. Do the pastor, school principal, catechetical leader, and parish secretary all know when and how to report an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor?

YES  NO

- **If No, provide explanation.**

3. Do the pastor, school principal, catechetical leader, and parish secretary all know how to obtain outreach for victims?

YES  NO

- **If No, provide explanation.**

4. a) Are copies of the code of conduct available to clergy and any other paid personnel and volunteers of the Church in positions of trust who have regular contact with children and young people?

YES  NO

- b) Are standards of conduct for clergy and other persons in positions of trust with regard to children and young people made available and clear to all members of the community?

YES  NO

- **If No, provide explanation.**
- **If Yes, auditors will ask to see the signed forms on file of those who signed.**
- **Does such a list exist and is it complete?**

YES  NO

5. Is safe environment training/education provided for each of the various groups set forth in Article 12?

- a) priests, deacons, employees and volunteers  YES  NO

- b) parents  YES  NO

- c) children and youth (Rel. Education and parochial school)  YES  NO

- **If No, provide explanation.**
- **If Yes, auditors will ask to review your documentation.**

6. a) Is there a policy for those parents who choose not to have their child participate in the diocesan safe environment education?

YES  NO

Continue and sign on next page

NAME OF PARISH AND TOWN: \_\_\_\_\_

b) Does the parish have documentation of the signed parental declination?

YES  NO

c) Does the parish have documentation that the safe environment education materials have been offered to parents?

YES  NO

d) If parents refuse to sign any form, has a record been maintained by the parish?

YES  NO

- **If No, provide explanation.**

7. a) Does the pastor ensure that background evaluations are conducted on all parish personnel to include priests and deacons as well as other paid personnel and volunteers whose duties include ongoing, unsupervised contact with minors?

YES  NO

b) Does the principal ensure that background evaluations are conducted all school personnel, to include priests and deacons, as well as other paid personnel and volunteers whose duties include ongoing, unsupervised contact with minors?

YES  NO

- **If No, provide explanation.**

8. Does the pastor ensure that visiting or non permanent clergy (e.g., weekend assistants, priests who witness marriages, perform baptisms, conduct funerals or otherwise engage in supply ministry OTHER THAN Mission Coop/Propagation of the Faith) are clergy in good standing?

YES  NO

- **If No, provide explanation.**

9. For those parishes directly affected by allegations of sexual abuse of children which have been brought forward during this current audit period: *(skip if not applicable)*

a) Has the diocese kept the parish informed?

YES  NO

b) Has the diocese provided outreach to affected persons or groups?

YES  NO

c) Has the diocese supported reinstatement of the accused when allegations are determined to be unfounded?

YES  NO

- **If Yes, describe. If No, provide explanation.**

**Name of the pastor/administrator certifying this parish self assessment: (Pastor must sign even if another person is filling out the form)**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_