



The Catholic Community of

*St. Thomas More*

## Safe Environment Update

The following is provided in order that all parishioners might be aware or reminded of the Safe Environment Policies and Procedures that are in place in the Diocese of Raleigh and at St. Thomas More.

In 2003, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops promulgated the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People and in 2011, revision of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, reaffirmed our deep commitment to creating a safe environment within the Church for children and youth.

Guided by the Charter, the Diocese of Raleigh Office of Child and Youth Protection enhanced the child safety guidelines that had been in place in the diocese since 1993:

- Criminal background checks were expanded beyond clergy and seminarians to include all employees and volunteers leading ministry with children.
- In cooperation with Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina, Safe Environment Program was implemented to train staff and volunteers on recognizing and reporting child abuse and neglect.
- Training is provided to staff and volunteers to help them know the proper protocols if they believe abuse or misconduct to have occurred.
- All accusations of sexual abuse, past or present, are reported to the NC Conference of District Attorneys.
- The safe environment program provides educational materials for families, educators and parents.
- The Diocese of Raleigh Review Board ensures that all allegations of the sexual abuse of a minor are reported to law enforcement and that all who come forward to report abuse are offered both assistance toward healing and a meeting with the Bishop.
- The Diocesan Code of Professional Responsibility was re-written as the Code of Conduct for Church Personnel of the Diocese of Raleigh. All personnel, all who work and “represent the Church by virtue of office, designated position, employment or contract” share high expectations for conduct and respect for those entrusted to our care.
- Local Safe Environment teams exist at each parish to help parishes remain diligent in our efforts to be a safe and sacred place for children to grow in age, wisdom, and faith.

St. Thomas More Church and Catholic School fully complies with the Diocese of Raleigh’s Child and Youth Protection policies and have moved toward a more stringent policy. We therefore require that employees and ALL volunteers, including catechists, school parents, users of our facilities anyone who interacts with children on our premises attend a Safe Environment workshop AND undergo a criminal background check and reference checks before they begin their work.

Occasional volunteers are supervised by certified personnel at all times and must sign a Personal Declaration that they have never been accused or convicted of child abuse.

Anyone who does not comply with these requirements will not be allowed to be involved in programs or activities with children on the premises. We also expect all staff and volunteers to exercise vigilance and care at all times to ensure the children’s safety and security.

**CONTACTS**

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