

4) Children and Youth Sexual Abuse Prevention Programs (Charter Article: 12)

Child sexual abuse prevention includes empowering children by teaching them body safety rules and steps they can take to ensure their own safety. The Archdiocese of Los Angeles currently offers the following age-appropriate prevention programs for children:

- VIRTUS® Teaching Touching Safety
- Good-Touch/Bad-Touch®
- Outcomes for Safe Environment Curriculum

Parishes/schools can select from the programs listed above. All these programs encourage parent involvement in reinforcing what their children learn by providing parent information and materials so that parents may fulfill their role as the “primary educators” of their children. For information call: (213) 637-7460.

www.la-archdiocese.org/org/protecting/safeguard/Pages/education.aspx

5) Background Checks and Screening (Charter Article: 13)

All clergy, paid parish/school personnel and volunteers who work regularly in a supervisory role with children or youth must be fingerprinted. For information call: (213) 637-7411.

www.la-archdiocese.org/org/hr/Pages/fingerprinting.aspx

6) Archdiocese of Los Angeles Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Policies (Charter Article: 6)

The Archdiocese of Los Angeles has implemented rigorous policies and procedures to provide a safe environment in our parishes and parish schools for all children and young people. These include:

- “Zero Tolerance”
- Guidelines for Adults Working or Volunteering with Minors
- Archdiocese of Los Angeles Boundary Guidelines for Junior High and High School Youth Working or Volunteering with Children or Youth
- Megan’s Law Compliance Procedures

To view these and other policies:

www.la-archdiocese.org/org/protecting

7) Reporting Child Abuse

Priests, deacons, school faculty and administrators and other staff members in our parishes and schools have been designated as mandated reporters under California law. When one of these persons receives information leading to a “reasonable suspicion” that a child is being abused or neglected, he or she must make a report to the appropriate child protection or law enforcement agency. For Information on Responding to an Allegation of Suspected Child Abuse: www.la-archdiocese.org/org/protecting/vam

If you are being abused, have been abused, or know someone who is being abused, you can call Victims Assistance Ministry at (800) 355-2545 for assistance to make a report, or seek help directly by contacting one of the Child Protective Services or one of the Law Enforcement Agencies listed below. In an emergency call 911.

Los Angeles County:

LA County Child Abuse Hotline: (800) 540-4000

Investigative Control Unit for All Child Abuse Reports: (213) 486-0530

Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department:

Special Victims Bureau (24 hours) (562) 946-8531
To speak to a detective (562) 946-7960

For callers residing outside the State of California who wish to contact Child Protective Services in Los Angeles: (213) 639-4500

Santa Barbara County:

Santa Barbara County Child Abuse Hotline: (800) 367-0166

District Attorney Victim-Witness Assistance: (805) 568-2400

Ventura County:

Ventura County Child Abuse Hotline: (805) 654-3200

District Attorney Victim’s Services: (805) 654-3622

WORKING TOGETHER TO PREVENT CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE 2016



ARCHDIOCESE OF LOS ANGELES POLICIES PROGRAMS RESOURCES



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Pope Francis has declared this to be a Year of Mercy, a time for all of us to rediscover God's mercy and love in our lives.

In this year, we continue to pray and support and seek mercy and justice for those who have been hurt by members of the Church. We also continue our efforts to ensure that children and young people are safeguarded in our parishes, schools and ministries.

Over the past 14 years, the Archdiocese's Office of Safeguard the Children has trained nearly 300,000 adults in the VIRTUS® child abuse prevention adult awareness programs and more than 1.4 million children and young people in the children's program. Moreover, through our systematic process of background checks of Church personnel, nearly 121,000 adults have been fingerprinted.

This brochure, along with the *Archdiocesan Administrative Handbook*, Chapter 9: Safe Environment (<http://handbook.la-archdiocese.org/chapter-9>), will assist you in learning more about this important topic.

In this Year of Mercy, may the doors of our parishes, our homes and our hearts be open to all who need our loving care — especially our children and young people, who are the hope and future of our Church and world.

I entrust all our children and families to the tender care and protection of our Blessed Mother Mary.

+ José H. Gomez

Most Reverend José H. Gomez
Archbishop of Los Angeles

Sexual Abuse of Minors - A Pervasive Social Problem

Child abuse is a frightening social reality. Numerous studies, while not in full agreement, estimate that some 40% of girls and 30% of boys suffer some form of molestation by an adult during their childhood and adolescence, with the majority of child sexual abuse occurring within the setting of an extended family. We as the "People of God" are called to work together to stop all forms of sexual abuse, wherever they occur.

Church Teaching on the Sexual Abuse of Minors

Church teaching condemns the sexual abuse of children and youth as seriously sinful. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states: "Connected to incest is any sexual abuse perpetrated by adults on children or adolescents entrusted to their care. The offense is compounded by the scandalous harm done to the physical and moral integrity of the young, who will remain scarred by it all their lives, and the violation of responsibility for their upbringing." (2389)

Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People

The *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* was adopted by the Bishops of the United States in June 2002. This important document contains the *Essential Norms* which are the Church's response to child sexual abuse and the concrete plan to work actively in the prevention of sexual abuse. Key components of the implementation of the *Charter* include:

1) Office of Victims Assistance Ministry Helps Abused Victims Find Healing (Charter Articles: 1, 2, 4,12,16)

The Office of Victims Assistance Ministry of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles was created in April, 2002 to deal with allegations of past or current sexual abuse by clergy, religious or any lay person working or volunteering for the Archdiocese. The Office is charged with creating a safe and compassionate environment

for victims to come forward, while ensuring that civil authorities are notified and victims are provided with counseling and other assistance in the healing process.

Call Victims Assistance Office (800) 355-2545 to:

- report misconduct by a priest, deacon or other person working or volunteering for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.
- get information about the Archdiocese's ongoing commitment, programs and resources that focus on outreach to victims/survivors of sexual abuse.
- report abuse suffered in another diocese and to receive assistance in connecting with the appropriate persons in that diocese.

www.la-archdiocese.org/org/protecting/vam

2) Office of Safeguard the Children and the Formation of Safeguard the Children Parish Committees (Charter Article: 2)

The establishment of the Office of Safeguard the Children and formation of Safeguard the Children Parish Committees was mandated by Cardinal Roger Mahony in 2002. The Office of Safeguard the Children assists these permanent Parish Committees in implementing child sexual abuse prevention education, Safe Environment policies, procedures and resources.

www.la-archdiocese.org/org/protecting/safeguard

3) Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Education for Adults (Charter Article: 12)

VIRTUS® "Protecting God's Children" is a three-hour training for adults which teaches the five basic steps of child sexual abuse prevention. This program is mandated for all adults who work with or around children or youth on a regular basis. Nearly 200,000 clergy, staff, volunteers and parents have attended the program. For information call: (213) 637-7227. <http://virtusonline.org/virtus>