

Archdiocese in compliance with USCCB ‘*Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*’ for 2009.

The Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas has been found in compliance with the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* approved by U. S. bishops.

In August, a team of independent auditors conducted on-site reviews of records and interviewed pastors and staff at 21 parishes and schools throughout the Archdiocese to help determine annual compliance with strict guidelines outlined in the Charter.

Auditors also inspected Archdiocesan policies and procedures to determine how well they were being implemented and carried out.

“We are producing a safer environment for our children by requiring background checks for staff and volunteers, and requiring training for both adults and children in what a safe environment for children really means,” explained Rita Herken, Virtus coordinator for the Archdiocese,

All employees of the Archdiocese, which includes clergy, and laymen and laywomen, as well as all volunteers whose roles put them in substantial contact with children and youth, are required to attend a child safety awareness program called Virtus®, Protecting God’s Children.

Those individuals who are in contact with children also agree to comply with all Archdiocesan policies and submit to a background check before working or volunteering with children or teens.

Auditors chose to check parishes of various sizes in suburban, rural and urban communities. They reviewed documents and questioned procedures concerning...

- How policies and procedures relating to the protection of children are carried out and made known to parishioners
- If the pastor, school principal or other staff know when and how to report an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor
- When safe environment training is provided and if documented
- If the pastor ensures that background evaluations are conducted on all parish personnel

- If the principal ensures that background evaluations are conducted on all school personnel

Father John Riley, Chancellor and Safe Environment Coordinator for the Archdiocese, explained that through the Charter approved in 2002 U. S. bishops promised to reach out to those who have been sexually abused as minors by anyone serving the Church in ministry, employment, or a volunteer position.

“The Charter requires the Church and the Archdiocese to be as open as possible about instances of sexual abuse of minors, with respect always for the privacy and the reputation of the individuals involved,” explained Father Riley.

This is the fifth consecutive year that the Archdiocese has been found to be in compliance with the Charter; however, it is the first time that auditors have conducted on-site parish and school visits.

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The Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas Wants to Protect God’s Children

Any person who believes that a child is being abused or neglected can make a confidential report to the Kansas State Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS), 800-922-5330.

In addition to reporting to the SRS, please call the Archdiocesan confidential report line 913-647-3051.

You may also call:

- Father John Riley, Chancellor and Safe Environment Coordinator, 913-647-0324
- Father Gary Pennings, Vicar General, 913-647-0340
- Father Brian Schieber, Vicar General for Clergy, 785-272-5590
- Dr. Kathy O’Hara, Superintendent of Catholic Schools, 913-647-0321
- Dennis Schemmel, Victim Assistance Coordinator, 913-909-2740

If you need to talk with someone call Catholic Charities toll-free at 866-621-5058.