

Timeline

Diocese of Manchester Child Protection Measures

2001-present

Background Checks

2004

The diocese began requiring clergy and employees who work with minors to undergo background screening. All Catholic school teachers had been fingerprinted beginning in 1997.

2004

The diocese began requiring all volunteers who work with minors to undergo background screening.

2006

The diocese began regularly conducting sex offender registry checks on all adults who work with minors.

2016-2018

The diocese began renewing background checks of all clergy and all adults who regularly work with minors.

As of April 2019, more than 30,500 adults have completed background screening, including all priests, deacons, and seminarians who minister in the Diocese of Manchester. Background checks are recompleted every 4 years.

Training of Adults

2001

The diocese began requiring all clergy, school staff, and parish employees who work regularly with minors to attend Protecting God's Children training, a sexual abuse awareness program. The Diocese of Manchester was a pilot diocese for this training program, which is now used throughout the United States. Since 2002, this training also has been required of all volunteers who regularly work with minors.

2007 & 2008

Renewing Our Promise Refresher Training Bulletins were distributed to all those working with minors in the Diocese of Manchester to remind them about what they learned at their initial training.

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Training of Adults *(cont'd)*

2011

Online child abuse awareness training became available. The online site initially used by the diocese was *Shield the Vulnerable*, and in 2017, the diocese began using Catholic Mutual Group's *Safe Haven: It's Up to You*. Safe Haven provides an online alternative to live workshops and is being used both as an initial training as well as a refresher course every 4 years.

2015

In order to enhance its child abuse prevention efforts, the diocese began emphasizing to an even greater extent the topic of appropriate boundaries in ministry. Information about boundaries was emphasized during our annual Child Abuse Prevention Month campaign.

2016

The diocese developed a lesson plan about appropriate boundaries in ministry that can be presented to adults as an enhancement to their initial safe environment training.

As of April 2019, more than 39,000 adults have been trained to recognize and report suspected abuse. Refresher training is required every 4 years.

2017

The diocese began offering an online training module about appropriate boundaries in ministry. The training, *Safe Side of the Line*, is available on the *Safe Haven* website.

2018

Guides for parents and staff about our expectations for appropriate boundaries in ministry were developed. Staff of the Office for Ministerial Conduct began providing live boundaries training presentations to school staff and other groups.



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Training of Children and Teens

2005-2007

In collaboration with Plymouth State University, the diocese developed and sponsored presentations of *Safe and Sound All Around*, an interactive theater presentation about personal safety for students in grades 1 through 6 and their parents.

2006

The *Circles of Care* curriculum was approved by the bishop as the personal safety training program for children and youth in the diocese. This curriculum was developed by diocesan staff and is now in use in other dioceses throughout the United States. The lessons are taught annually to students enrolled in diocesan Catholic schools and parish religious education programs.

All students enrolled in Catholic Schools and religious education programs are offered a personal safety lesson annually. During the 2017-2018 school year 12,705 students received the lessons.

2008

Netsmartz lessons (developed by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and the Boys & Girls Clubs of America to teach children and youth how to stay safer on the internet) became an option for students in grades 7-12 as an alternative to *Circles of Care*.

2010

Additional *Netsmartz* lessons were approved for use with students in grades 1-6.

2013

A safe environment lesson for teens who assist in ministry with minors was developed and was later updated in 2016. This optional lesson can be presented at the parish level as a live training session.

2014

An additional *Netsmartz* lesson about online safety was approved for students in grades 5 and 6 and an additional *Circles of Care* lesson was developed for high school students.

2018

A safe environment lesson was developed for family faith formation groups that include adults and children in grades K-8. The lesson places an emphasis on how important it is for parents to communicate with their children about safety-related topics.

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Policies, Procedures, and Consultative Groups

2002

Diocesan Review Board members were appointed and began meeting regularly. The Diocesan Review Board advises the Bishop of Manchester on matters involving the sexual abuse of minors by Church personnel. Currently, the Board meets six times per year.

2002

A Task Force for Sexual Misconduct Policy was appointed by the bishop to make recommendations for a new policy on the sexual abuse of minors by Church personnel.

2004

The ***Promise to Protect, Pledge to Heal***: Policy for the Protection of Children and Young People, Policy and Procedures and ***Serving Christ, Serving Others*** Code of Ministerial Conduct became effective.

2004

The Safe Environment Council, consisting of lay representatives from around the state, was established to advise and assist the diocesan Office for Ministerial Conduct on child safety policies, procedures, education, and resources. Currently, the Council meets approximately 3 times per year.

2004

All pastors, principals, and camp directors appointed Safe Environment Coordinators to assist them in ensuring that diocesan child safety policies are followed.

2005-2013, 2019

Statewide and/or regional Safe Environment Conferences were held.

2006

A schedule of safe environment visits to all parishes, diocesan schools, and camps was developed to determine compliance with implementation of policies and procedures.

2007

The Diocese of Manchester established an online safe environment database to track compliance with the screening and training requirements.

2007

After extensive review and input from the public and those whom the Policy affects, the updated ***Promise to Protect, Pledge to Heal*** Policy for the Protection of Children and Young People and ***Serving Christ, Serving Others*** Code of Ministerial Conduct became effective. The Policy and Code were once again updated in 2011.

2015

Bishop Libasci approved additional updates to the Policy for the Protection of Children and Young People and the Code of Conduct.

2018

Bishop Libasci approved an alternative reporting system for clergy to report suspected abuse or misconduct involving other clergy, including a bishop, and for anyone to report suspected abuse or misconduct involving a bishop. The mechanism allows for reporting outside regular diocesan channels.

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Staffing

2001

The Bishop appointed a Delegate for Sexual Misconduct (in 2004, the title was changed to “Delegate for Ministerial Conduct”). The Delegate is responsible for the implementation and ongoing oversight of the *Promise to Protect, Pledge to Heal* Policy and the *Serving Christ, Serving Others* Code of Conduct. The Delegate is also responsible for reporting all cases of suspected sexual abuse of minors by Church personnel to the appropriate civil authorities.

2001

A licensed clinical social worker was appointed to provide pastoral assistance and advocacy to those reporting having been sexually abused as a minor and their families. This position is now known as the Director of the Office for Healing and Pastoral Care.

2002

The Bishop appointed a Delegate for Policy Administration to assist the Delegate for Sexual Misconduct.

2004

Independent investigators were hired to assist with background screening and investigate reported instances of sexual abuse of a minor and violations of the Code of Conduct. The diocese currently uses the services of three investigators.

2006

Upon the recommendation of the Diocesan Review Board, the bishop established the position of Compliance Officer (and later, Director of Safe Environment Programs) to oversee parish, school, and camp safe environment compliance. Shortly afterward, the position of Safe Environment Assistant was established.

Today, the diocese has two full-time staff members and part-time reviewers, as needed, dedicated to ensuring that schools, parishes, and camps comply with safe environment policies and procedures. The safe environment staff members conduct on-site reviews at each parish and school at least once every four years and annually at diocesan camps.

To learn more about how the Catholic Church in New Hampshire works to protect children visit catholicnh.org/safety