

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.

To date, more than 28,000 adults have completed background screening, including all priests, deacons, and seminarians who minister in the Diocese of Manchester.



child
safety

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.

2011

Online child abuse awareness training became available. The online site currently in use by the diocese is *Shield the Vulnerable*. This training provides an online alternative to live *Protecting God's Children* workshops and is being used both as an initial training as well as a refresher course every three years.

To date, more than 35,000 adults have been trained to recognize and report suspected abuse.

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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. Last year, 15,905 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.

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.



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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 2-3 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.

2005-2012

Statewide 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.

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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/child-safety**