



Our Safe Environment Begins with YOU!



THE ROMAN CATHOLIC
ARCHDIOCESE
OF ATLANTA

THE OFFICE OF
**Child
& Youth**
PROTECTION

Introducing OCYP:

The Office of Child & Youth Protection

OCYP consists of two departments:

- Victim's Assistance Office
- Safe Environment Office

OCYP exists to help the parishes, schools and organizations of the Archdiocese of Atlanta:

1. Meet the requirements set forth by the USCCB Charter
2. Ensure that everyone in the Archdiocese understands their role in establishing a safe environment for our children and vulnerable individuals.
3. Provide assistance to those who have been harmed.



The Danger is REAL

- A **Registered Sex Offender** applied for a PSR teaching position at an Archdiocesan Parish
- A **Youth Minister** invited a minor to stay at his house
- A **Reckless Driver with Multiple Charges** volunteered to drive carpool for a location's event
- A **Parent reported a boundary violation** where a teacher was sending personal texts to a student



Who Needs to Register?

Sterling Infosystems Workforce Direct is used to track safe environment approval and background screenings in the Archdiocese of Atlanta.



So who should register with the Safe Environment Office?

EVERYONE

Who volunteers or works in the Archdiocese!

Clergy

Employees

Volunteers

Independent Contractors

Community Service



How can YOU help?

If you are involved with organizing or sponsoring any events:

1. **Insure everyone is “Safe Environment Approved”** who is working for your event
2. **Work with the Safe Environment Office** to verify Safe Environment Status and update paperwork if needed for every volunteer
3. **PLAN AHEAD:** Allow time for volunteers working with children or vulnerable individuals to have background screenings completed - Turnaround times are dependent on Court House realizing information, not on the Archdiocese!



Do's & Don't

- **Do** have a parent or another adult around when meeting with a child and/or vulnerable individual
- **Do** make sure that any physical contact with a child and/or vulnerable is done in a very public place
- **Do not** meet one on one with a child and/or vulnerable individual
- **Do not** dress or undress yourself in the presence of a child and/or vulnerable individual or allow a child and/or vulnerable individual to dress or undress in your presence unless the child and/or vulnerable individual is a relative
- **Do not** drive, meet, or take an overnight trip alone with a minor and/or vulnerable individual

Do ✓ Don't ✗

Child Abuse Reporting Law

- Changes to Mandatory Reporter law
- Became effective July 1, 2012
- Biggest changes?
 - Mandatory reporters now include:
VOLUNTEERS
*Not just Priests, church officials,
teachers and school officials*
 - New rules regarding reporting by
members of Clergy



Mandatory Reporters

“Mandatory Reporters **SHALL** report all reasonable suspicion of abuse.”

- Does not mean “may” or “can” or “should”
- **Shall** means YOU WILL DO IT.

A Commandment

- There are penalties for non-compliance

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What Must a Mandatory Reporter Do?

- The Mandatory Reporter:
 1. Shall notify the person in charge of the facility, or the designated delegate thereof
 2. The person in charge shall report or cause a report to be made in accordance with this Code section.
- The person in charge of the facility is the Pastor or Principal.

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What to Do and When to Do It

- An oral report shall be made immediately, but in no case later than 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to believe a child has been abused
- Call DFACS or in the absence of such agency, to an appropriate police authority or district attorney
- Follow-up with a letter to the agency (Contact the Safe Environment Office for assistance)
- Have the Pastor's contact information available to notify him of the incident



New GA Elder & Disabled Reporting Law

- July 1, 2013, House Bill 78 came into effect
- Law deals with two separate, but equally important situations
 1. Abuse, neglect, or exploitation of disabled adults or elder persons who **do not** live in long-term care facilities
 2. Abuse, neglect, or exploitation of residents of long-term care facilities
- **The reporting requirements for each situation are different**



New GA Elder & Disable Reporting Law

Significant changes have been made to the list of **mandatory** reporters of abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

The two most important additions to the list are:

1. Everyone listed as a mandated reporter for Child Abuse (including volunteers)

2. Clergy

(Exception is provided for information solely gained through the Sacrament of Reconciliation)



New GA Elder & Disable Reporting Law

- **Situation 1: ABUSE, NEGLECT, OR EXPLOITATION OCCURRING OUTSIDE OF LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES**
- A report of suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation must be made to two (2) places:
 1. The Georgia Department of Human Services (DHS); and
 2. The local Sheriff or District Attorney (contact the county where the abuse is happening)
- **Report must be made within 24 hours**
- **Follow up with a written report**

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New GA Elder & Disable Reporting Law

- **Situation 2: ABUSE, NEGLECT, OR EXPLOITATION OCCURRING IN LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES**
- A report of suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation must be made to two (2) places:
 1. The Georgia Department of Community Health(DCH)
 2. The local Sheriff or District Attorney (contact the county where the abuse is happening)
 3. Further, **a written report must be made to the Georgia DCH within 24 hours of the initial report**
- **Report must be made within 24 hours**

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What you should not do:

Archdiocesan policy is clear!

- **PLEASE REMEMBER: Your Role is to REPORT.**
- There is to be no investigation by you or anyone else at the parish, school, or diocesan level.
- **DO NOT** investigate or make credibility determinations.

Your duty is to pass along the information –

Let others (DFACs, police, etc.) investigate!



Failure to Report

Is a CRIMINAL Violation!

“Any person or official required ... to report a suspected case of Child Abuse, Elder or Disable who knowingly and willfully fails to do so shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.”

- Potential JAIL time
- Potential impact on job
- Potential civil proceeding



How to Contact SE Office

To better serve you the Safe Environment Office has now created a Ticketing System

Please Email Us:

SESupport@archatl.com

Or Call Our
24-HOUR REPORTING LINE

888-437-0764



REMEMBER

Safe Environment is
EVERYONE'S responsibility...



It all starts with
YOU!