



Safe Environment

Diocese of Wheeling - Charleston

Fall 2018

WV Issues **NEW** Reporting Requirements for Child/Sex Abuse

West Virginia Senate Bill 465, relating to the mandated reporting of child abuse and neglect, was passed during the 2018 Legislative Session and it became effective on June 5, 2018.

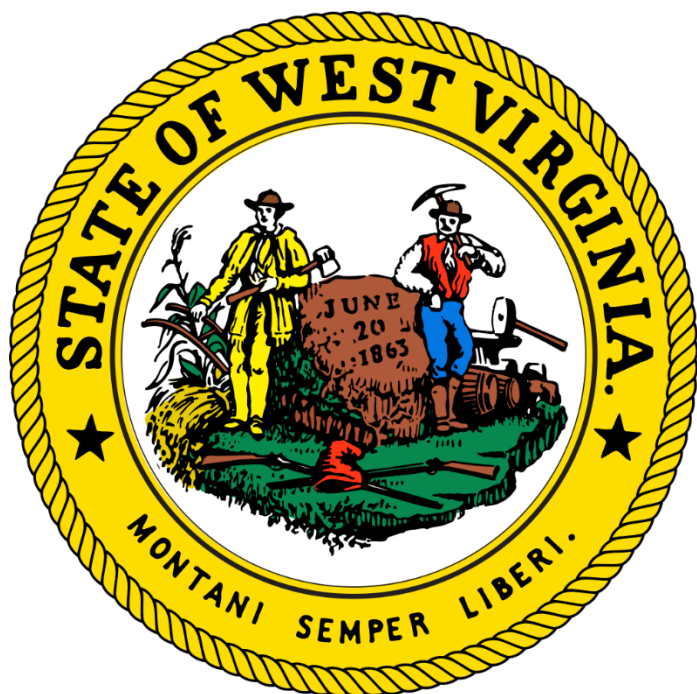
Two very important changes are now in effect:



1. The timeline for reporting has been reduced from 48 hours to 24 hours. (This applies to anyone who, because of his or her job, position, or role is obligated to report. Please see Section (a) below for the actual language regarding who is obligated to report.)

2. All school personnel (public and private) must sign a written acknowledgement of receipt of the new reporting requirements of the statute. (Although the 24 hour reporting requirement pertains to everyone as specified in Section (a) below, the actual form for signature pertains to our Catholic Schools only. The Department of Catholic Schools will be working with principals to accomplish this mandate for signature/acknowledgement as school gets underway. Public schools will be doing the same as well.)

Here is the actual language from W.Va. Code §49-2-803. Please take a few moments to read it.



(a) Any medical, dental, or mental health professional, Christian Science practitioner, religious healer, school teacher or other school personnel, social service worker, child care or foster care worker, emergency medical services personnel, peace officer or law-enforcement official, humane officer, member of the clergy, circuit court judge, family court judge, employee of the Division of Juvenile Services, magistrate, youth camp administrator or counselor, employee, coach or volunteer of an entity that provides organized activities for children, or commercial film or photographic print processor who has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is neglected or abused, including sexual abuse or sexual assault, or observes the child being subjected to conditions that are likely to result in abuse or neglect shall immediately, and not more than 24 hours after suspecting this abuse or neglect, report the circumstances to the Department of Health and Human Resources. In any case where the

reporter believes that the child suffered serious physical abuse or sexual abuse or sexual assault, the reporter shall also immediately report to the State Police and any law-enforcement agency having jurisdiction to investigate the complaint. Any person required to report under this article who is a member of the staff or volunteer of a public or private institution, school, entity that provides organized activities for children, facility, or agency shall also immediately notify the person in charge of the institution, school, entity that provides organized activities for children, facility, or agency, or a designated agent thereof, who may supplement the report or cause an additional report to be made: Provided, That notifying a person in charge, supervisor, or superior does not exempt a person from his or her mandate to report suspected abuse or neglect.

(b) County boards of education and private school administrators shall provide all employees with a written statement setting forth the requirements contained in this section and shall obtain and preserve a signed acknowledgment from school employees that they have received and understand the reporting requirement.

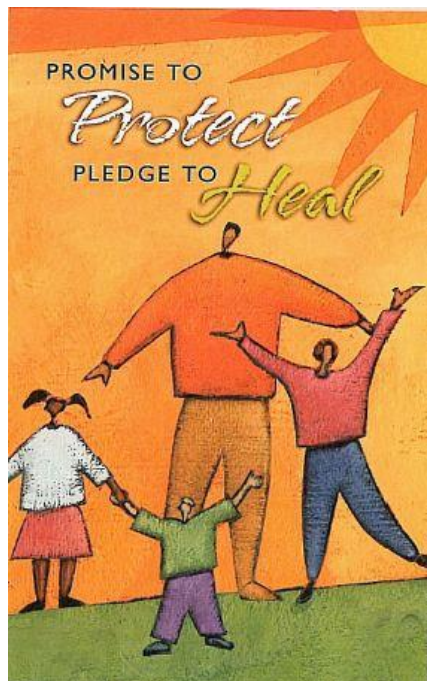
(c) Nothing in this article is intended to prevent individuals from reporting suspected abuse or neglect on their own behalf. In addition to those persons and officials specifically required to report situations involving suspected abuse or neglect of children, any other person may make a report if that person has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been abused or neglected in a home or institution or observes the child being subjected to conditions or circumstances that would reasonably result in abuse or neglect.

(d) The provisions of this section are not applicable to persons under the age of 18.

As a result of the update to the Diocese's Sex Abuse Policy Booklet in accordance with WV state law, all hard copy and electronic Sex Abuse Policy Booklets have been reprinted/revised to reflect the new reporting requirement. To obtain hard copies of the updated Sex Abuse Policy booklets, please call the Office of Safe Environment at 304.230.1504. For electronic copies of all Safe Environment-related forms and the policy, please go to www.dwc.org, click "Diocese" and under "Offices", click "Safe Environment". Down the left side of the screen, click "Download Files and Forms." The Sex Abuse Policy Booklet and corresponding Policy Form that you should be using from this point forward should say "June 2018." The Background Check Form remains the same. No revisions were necessary to the Background Check Form. Please continue to use the existing Background Check Form.

Why Is There An Office Of Safe Environment?

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) requires that all Dioceses/Eparchies have in place a Safe Environment Program for the protection of children and young people. The **"Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People"** was adopted by the USCCB in June 2002 as a response to sexual abuse of minors by Catholic priests and deacons, particularly from the time period of 1950 to 2002. The USCCB established an **Office of Child and Youth Protection** to oversee the application of the Charter's principles and to create the means for accountability for ensuring implementation of standards.



Reporting

To report suspected cases of sexual abuse please contact **your local law enforcement agency** or call the **West Virginia Adult / Child Abuse Hotline: 1.800.352.6513**

To report suspected cases of sexual abuse of children by personnel of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston to the Diocese, please contact one of the Bishop's designees at: **304.233.0880 or 1.888.434.6237:**

- Sr. Ellen F. Dunn, O.P., ext. 264
- Mr. Bryan Minor, ext. 263
- Rev. Msgr. Frederick P. Annie, V.G., ext. 267
- Rev. Msgr. Anthony Cincinnati, STD, V.E., ext. 270

You may also fill out and return a confidential **Complaint Form for Allegations of Sexual Abuse of a Minor** by printing one from the Diocese's web site at www.dwc.org, then clicking Diocese > Offices > Office of Safe Environment > Download Files and Forms or by calling 304.230.1504 to request a form via U.S. mail from the Office of Safe Environment.

The Three Components of Compliance

The Safe Environment Program by the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston consists of the following three components:

- ✓ Background Check
- ✓ Policy Relating to Sexual Abuse of Children (June 2018)

- ✓ Awareness training for adults (VIRTUS online or live training)

All three components are mandated by the Diocese for persons seeking employment or seeking to volunteer directly or indirectly with children. A person is considered in compliance with the Diocese's Safe Environment Policy upon successful completion of all three components. Every year, the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston - as well as all other

dioceses in the United States - is audited by the USCCB for compliance with its "*Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*."

Touching Safety

A Student Awareness Program has been implemented since the fall of 2005 to give children information (appropriate for their age levels) and skills to help recognize acceptable and unacceptable behaviors and how to effectively deal with those behaviors. This is a VIRTUS program called "**Touching Safety**". The program is taught in Catholic schools and as part of Parish Schools of Religion. This program offers lesson plans for children in grades Kindergarten through 12.

The "Touching Safety" lesson cycle for this year is:

School Year **2018-19 ... CYCLE TWO** ... Lesson Three (by the end of October) and Lesson Four (by the end of the school year).



Welcome to the New Superintendent of Catholic Schools



Most Rev. Michael J. Bransfield has announced that Mrs. Mary Ann Deschaine, Ed.S., has been named superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. Deschaine will begin her duties in August.

Deschaine comes to West Virginia from the Diocese of Saginaw in Michigan, where she served as superintendent since 2011. In Saginaw, Deschaine administered Catholic education in 14 schools (3 high schools, 2 regional schools, 1 K-12 school, and 8 parish schools) covering 11 counties. She developed programs in Saginaw including a Teacher Growth Model, Principal Growth Model, fingerprinting policy, teacher manual, principal manual, board training and implementation, development of a pastor/principal resource book, succession planning and most importantly, she spearheaded and completed a comprehensive strategic planning process for diocesan schools. In addition to her service as superintendent, Mary Ann assisted her diocese as an organizational consultant,

assisting all 13 departments in the Chancery.

"I am very pleased to welcome Mary Ann as superintendent of Catholic schools for our diocese," Bishop Bransfield said. "Her experience in academic leadership within school communities ranging from strategic planning to facilities management, and professional development to student recruiting will allow her to be an outstanding administrator for our 25 schools."

Deschaine completed her Education Specialist degree at Saginaw Valley State University and holds a Master's

degree in Education from Michigan State University and a Bachelor's degree from Central Michigan University. She has participated in the National Association of Elementary School Principals Principal mentoring program, is a Van Lunen Fellow, completed the Superintendent Preparation Academy in Michigan and received the Gerstacker Fellowship while studying at Saginaw Valley State. Deschaine holds four professional certifications from the State of Michigan and has extensive experience as teacher and principal in Catholic, Montessori and public schools at various grade levels.

"I am honored to have been selected for this position in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston," Deschaine said. "I look forward to working with the dedicated diocesan and parish school personnel and staff, as we are led by the Holy Spirit to implement a faith-filled curriculum for the students in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston's Catholic Schools."

Mary Ann and her husband, Mark, are the parents of five adult children. Mark is currently an Assistant Professor in the Department of Educational Leadership at Central Michigan University.

Digital DOs and DON'Ts for Children and Teens (and Adults, Too!)



**Brought to you by the Office of Safe Environment for the
Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston**

Most children, teens, and adults have cell phones these days. They are great, and you can use them for a lot of good things. You probably use your cell phone for texting with your friends and family, looking stuff up online, taking pictures, and posting to social media.

Here are some very important things you should know about having a digital life and keeping yourself safe and out of trouble:

- Never assume that your texts and photos will remain private. They won't. There is no such thing as total privacy when it comes to devices such as cell phones, tablets, and computers or the internet. You cannot be guaranteed total privacy, ever. And even though setting your social media accounts to private is helpful, it still is not 100 percent foolproof. Be very careful and thoughtful about what you text or post.

- Once you send a text, photo, or video you have no control over it. You can't get it back. You can't control who shares it with others or posts it to forums like Snapchat, Twitter, or Instagram, where potentially hundreds, thousands, or millions of people may see it. If what you texted or posted was inappropriate, that could be devastating.

- Sending and receiving nude photos or sexually explicit photos of people younger than 18 is child pornography and is a crime. Even if one or both persons sending or receiving the photos also is younger than 18 ... **IT'S AGAINST THE LAW.** If an inappropriate sexual image of a minor (anyone younger than 18) is circulating, **ANYONE** – no matter how young or old – who sends or receives it may face criminal charges. Some of the consequences include charges of delinquency/truancy, jail, and being required to register nationally as a sex offender. When you are required to register nationally as a sex offender, that designation follows you wherever you go, many times for life.



- It is against the law to use nude photos to threaten, harass, intimidate, or embarrass someone.

- If you have unsolicited sexually explicit material on your phone, tablet, computer, or any other device, this may be evidence of a crime and is subject to mandatory reporting obligations to local authorities which may protect you from criminal prosecution. If you receive an inappropriate text, photo, or video, tell a trusted adult immediately. The photo or video may constitute child pornography, and you will want to protect yourself against any consequences, especially if someone is sending you photos or videos that you do not want and did not ask for.

- If you text, post, share, or comment on sexually explicit material, there could be consequences that are painful and far-reaching, including getting kicked out of school, losing your job, or facing criminal charges and jail time.

- If you are bullying someone online, you may face charges like harassment or stalking.



- If you threaten to share sexually explicit material or photos of another, you are also engaging in prohibited criminal conduct under West Virginia law.

- If you are being harassed or bullied online or via text, tell a trusted adult immediately.

- If you are being bullied or threatened or harassed, create a record of the facts and evidence. List all the information relative to who, what, when, where, how, and why. This will help those in positions of authority – including the police - to properly address or investigate the matter if required.

- DO NOT ask someone to send nude photos or videos to you.

- DO NOT send nude photos or videos of yourself to anyone.

- DO NOT send or ask someone to send nude photos or sexually explicit photos, even if it's your boyfriend or girlfriend and you are convinced that you love them and mean no harm. It is still illegal if the sender and/or receiver is/are younger than 18. People who love you, DO NOT ask you to send them nude photos. And sending someone a nude photo of yourself will not make someone love you.

- If you receive nude photos of someone younger than 18 years old and send them to your friends, that is called distribution of child pornography and is against the law. If you are 18 or older and you send nude photos to someone younger than you, that also is a crime. Even if you are over 18, threatening to share such photos with others or threatening to post such photos is criminal conduct in West Virginia.

- People are not always who they seem online. That person that you have never met but you think is a fellow teenager and are chatting or exchanging texts with may be an adult sex offender intent on doing you terrible harm.

- Any adult who sends you inappropriate texts, photos, or videos should be reported immediately.

- The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, which includes all its schools, churches, buildings, properties, and programs, follows state and federal law as well as the rules of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops when it comes to sex abuse and inappropriate activity such as sexting. When your teachers, parents, priests, or other teens or children voice concerns to the Diocese about these issues, we report the information to the appropriate authorities. If you come to any trusted adult, we can promise you that we will do everything we can to help you and to maintain your privacy and dignity, but we will not guarantee secrecy. If something bad or inappropriate has happened, we will report it to the proper authorities so that you can get the help that you need. **Not** reporting inappropriate activity could result in criminal charges and delay help and/or intervention.



- Every decision you make has consequences – good or bad. Think very carefully how you use your social media accounts and how you communicate using your phone. One tweet can change your life. One text can change your life. That sounds dramatic, but it's true. Just ask any of the people who have been kicked out of school or lost their jobs or are in prison because of something they texted or posted online.

- As you are thinking about what to post or text, ask yourself: if I post or text this, will I keep my dignity or will I lose my dignity? If the answer is that you will lose your dignity, **don't do it.**



Live your digital life by **The Three Rs**:

Respect for self

Respect for others

Responsibility for your actions

- Imagine the power of using your text or social media platforms in positive ways. Strive to use your platforms to be an inspiration. Make someone smile or laugh. Learn something productive and new. Connect in appropriate ways with family and friends. Be positive. Be kind. Help people. The power of positive thinking and action will enrich your life in ways you never imagined ... embrace it!

Three Things That Simply Must Be Done

By Erika Tyner Allen, J.D., Ph.D.

As school gets back underway, I bet that many of you parents out there have been doing a lot of the same things I have been doing. For example, I wanted my two elementary school-age boys to start the year healthy, so we implemented an earlier bedtime routine and focused on less sugar and more protein. I wanted them to remember at least some of what they had learned last year, so we reviewed a few of their spring workbooks, and I enrolled my younger son in a four-day “back-to-school” refresher. Of course, I wanted them to feel good about themselves, too, so we came home with armloads of new knit shirts and two tidy haircuts. (Okay, okay, so the fresh haircuts were really to make me happy...)



As so many of us spend the late summer and early fall getting our kids back into a school routine, we should be mindful of health, academics, and hygiene, of course. Too often, however, even conscientious parents and guardians sometimes overlook preparing their children to go back to school safe from abuse by any person who might seek to harm them. Like most of you, I shudder even considering the possibility. But after years of consulting on the *Protecting God's Children*® program, I probably take this responsibility more seriously than most. Rarely do I feel like a role model of good mothering, but perhaps three ways in which I have tried to help my kids be safe as they start school this year can serve as an outline for your own efforts.



Meet ALL of the teachers. Most of us do a decent job of meeting our child's classroom teacher. Indeed, schools usually make meeting that teacher pretty easy by hosting events for this very purpose: “back-to-school” or “parents’ night.” Likely, though, your child spends a portion of his or her day under the care of other adults at the school. At our local school, we call these *specials*—the part of the day that children go to art or library or music or P.E. If we are serious about making sure that our kids are safe with the adults who care for them, there is simply no substitute for a face-to-face meeting with each of these teachers, as well. Meeting each of

these individuals may take more initiative. You may have to track down names and phone numbers from the classroom teacher or the main office. Make a point of meeting each of these people—who will all turn out to be great, I am sure—where they work with the kids. You will want to see their physical settings because, after all, keeping kids safe from abuse involves both safe adults and safe environments: be wary of trailers or other remote meeting sites or small areas where someone cannot see what is happening to your child. Ask the teacher to

explain how he or she keeps kids safe in such places, or speak with an administrator about what kind of monitoring is in place for remote areas.

Talk about bathrooms and cafeterias. I am repeatedly struck by how much intrigue both the school bathroom and the cafeteria hold for my two boys! As parents, we may forget that school-age children are not yet too long removed from days dedicated entirely to their most basic physical needs, but these places can also be the setting for abuse and bullying. Make sure that your children know not only the drill for the lunch line, but also the informal social rules about sharing or trading lunches and choosing seats. Rehearse with your child how he or she will respond if, for example, a classmate says “You can’t sit by us!” Plain-old bullying is a form of trauma that can be very painful.



Spend even more time discussing the school bathroom. Your child should be reminded that only a few special people should ever see his or her private parts—parents, doctors, etc. The school bathroom may present questions, then, as your child may not be afforded complete privacy. Consider some of these basic rules: no one should go in a toilet stall with your child for any reason; your child should be discrete if he uses a urinal; your child should not play in the bathroom—especially with pants down or while otherwise exposed. Make sure that your children understand that these rules apply not just to adults who might also be in the bathroom but with other children, too.

Reconsider the carpool line. Many children’s activities nowadays are facilitated by a carpool line—a system by which parents simply pull up to the school or other location and children climb into or out of the car. Parents love carpool line because it saves them finding a parking spot as well as hoisting siblings in and out of the car; schools love it because it is a (relatively) organized way to manage dismissal. But, at the risk of inciting widespread mommy outrage, I’d like to tentatively suggest that the carpool line may compromise your ability to keep your child safe from abuse.



Of course, the biggest reason to walk your children to their class—or at least into the school—is that you will have a far greater sense of the people and places in your child’s life. Moreover, predators prey on children with whom they believe they will not be caught. The fact that a potential perpetrator sees you regularly with your child may be all it takes to deter a bad act.

Certainly, it takes a village to raise a child—a village in which your children will catch a ride to school with a buddy, use a public bathroom, and be taught by more than one adult. And surely, most children will do all of these things safely. Moreover, you will never, ever be able to perfectly manage-away all possible ways in which your child might be harmed. But, as the family

heads back to school this year, consider that keeping kids safe from abuse deserves at least as much thought as that trip to the barber.



PRAYER FOR HEALING VICTIMS OF ABUSE

God of endless love,
ever caring, ever strong,
always present, always just:
You gave your only Son
to save us by the blood of his cross.

Gentle Jesus, shepherd of peace,
join to your own suffering
the pain of all who have been hurt
in body, mind, and spirit
by those who betrayed the trust placed in them.

Hear our cries as we agonize
over the harm done to our brothers and sisters.
Breathe wisdom into our prayers,
soothe restless hearts with hope,
steady shaken spirits with faith:
Show us the way to justice and wholeness,
enlightened by truth and enfolded in your mercy.

Holy Spirit, comforter of hearts,
heal your people's wounds
and transform our brokenness.
Grant us courage and wisdom, humility and grace,
so that we may act with justice
and find peace in you.
We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

Amen.