

228/2016
15 June 2016

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we continue to ensure a safe environment within our parishes, schools, and all other Catholic agencies and institutions throughout the Diocese of Cleveland, we find it necessary to regularly review and update those guiding policies and standards which address the safety of our young people and overall standards of conduct expected of those engaged in ministry in the eight counties of the diocese.

Therefore, after proper consultation I have approved and now promulgate, 15 June 2016, revised editions of both the *Policy for the Safety of Children in Matters of Sexual Abuse* and the *Standards of Conduct for Ministry*. Beginning today both of these revised documents will be available on the diocesan website www.dioceseofcleveland.org from which site they can be downloaded or read. A small number of printed copies will be mailed to parishes, school presidents and principals as well as other diocesan offices, agencies, and institutions within the weeks following. The new revised *Policy for the Safety of Children in Matters of Sexual Abuse (revised 2016)* and the *Standards of Conduct for Ministry (revised 2016)* will become effective 31 December 2016. Until that time the *Policy for the Safety of Children in Matters of Sexual Abuse 2007* and the *Standards of Conduct for Ministry 2005* remain in force.

In addition to using this as an opportunity for the entire diocesan community to review the current policies and standards, each document also features revised or altogether new material. For this reason, I have directed members of my staff to design and conduct an orientation program that will be available throughout the Diocese of Cleveland. Accompanying this letter is a broad outline of the procedures which will be used in this six month interim period of preparation.

Therefore, every employee and volunteer within the Diocese of Cleveland is expected to participate in an orientation session and to submit the *Acknowledgment of Receipt and Review* document to his/her supervisor by 31 December 2016. Reproducible copies of these forms will be sent with the printed forms of the documents, will be available on the diocesan website, or can be copied from the back of each document.

In addition to the revision of these important documents, I have also approved a new requirement regarding criminal background checks for all employees and volunteers serving within the Diocese of Cleveland. The Policy now indicates that the background check should be done at least every five years. Additional information on this process will be sent out soon.

I want you to know of my appreciation and admiration for the spirit with which all in our Diocese have come together to provide a safe environment for the children in our care. The response has been outstanding! As we begin this time of renewal, I once again ask for that same spirit. Our goal is to be in full compliance by 31 December 2016!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Richard G. Lennon
Bishop of Cleveland

Enclosure