

**Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People**

On June 14, 2002 the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops approved the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. The Charter addresses the Church's commitment to deal appropriately and effectively with cases of sexual abuse of minors by clergy and other Church personnel (employees or volunteers). A firm commitment was made by the Bishops to provide a safe and secure environment for all children involved in programs operated by the Church. Accompanying the Charter were specific norms that have become law for dioceses in the United States. The norms were approved by the Holy See on December 8, 2002.

The Diocese of Harrisburg, including all catechetical employees and volunteers, will fully comply with all of the requirements of the Charter, the accompanying Norms, Canon and Civil law regarding the protection of children. All parishes, employees and volunteers in the diocese will implement the following steps:

- ❑ Conduct the required background checks for all employees and volunteers.
- ❑ Provide training for employees and volunteers who work with children.
- ❑ Inform employees of Pennsylvania Child Protective Services law regarding the obligation of employees to report suspected child abuse.
- ❑ Implement safe environment programs in the parish religious education program.
- ❑ Report any suspected abuse of minors to the designated Church and Civil authorities.

All employees and volunteers will comply with the requirements of the Charter, as provided by the Secretariat for Education and the diocesan Youth Protection Office, for employment or volunteer work in the parish religious education programs in the diocese to continue.

Policy approved:  
December 1, 2003

NCD/Bishop of Harrisburg