



# Keeping our children safe

SPECIAL  REPORT

A look at what we've done in the last 5 years



**Diocese of Manchester**  
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Over the last five years the entire Catholic community in NH has worked together to address the issue of the sexual abuse of minors in our Church. We have labored to repair the harm done in the past and to work for healing in the lives of survivors and their families. We have completely revised our approach to conducting investigations and reporting to civil authorities. We have committed ourselves to making safe environment training, background screening, and a culture of common responsibility a way of life for us and those whom we serve. The Catholic community in 2007 is far different than the one that faced a crisis of great proportion in 2002, and all the Catholic faithful deserve the credit for our accomplishments.

The Office for Ministerial Conduct is committed to ensuring that this work remains a priority. We continue to work on new initiatives to keep our children and youth safe. In doing so, we consult with child protection organizations, law enforcement, other dioceses, and youth organizations. Our ministry includes the protection of children and youth as well as continued outreach to those who were harmed in the past as victims and more recently by the crisis itself. We take our jobs very seriously, and we could not do our work were it not for many others.

We take this opportunity to thank the thousands of people who show their dedication to keeping our children safe by participating in this work. Together, we count on the Lord to bring this work to fulfillment.

Reverend Edward J. Arsenault  
Diane Murphy Quinlan  
Mary Ellen D'Intino

## Diocese of Manchester

### numbers

**Many**, many people are involved in the ongoing work to protect children. In addition to our pastors, principals, directors, victim assistance coordinator, and our newly expanded Ministerial Conduct staff, the following have been involved:

- **9** Safe Environment Council members
- **156** Safe Environment Coordinators
- **10** *Protecting God's Children* Trainers
- **2** Trained Investigators
- **Over 15,000** clerics, employees, and volunteers who have been trained in sexual abuse awareness, prevention, and the reporting requirements under New Hampshire law.

Since 2002, the Diocese of Manchester has made significant strides in its efforts to ensure a safe environment in the Church. These are some common questions about what we have accomplished.

**Have there been any revisions to the diocesan policy for handling reports about sexual abuse since it was updated and implemented in 2004?** Yes. After input from the public and those whom the Policy affects, the Diocesan Review Board made a number of suggested improvements for an improved Policy that Bishop McCormack will publish and make effective on March 19, 2007. The Policy will be distributed widely in parishes and schools and made available on the diocesan website in its entirety in English and Spanish and in summary, in Vietnamese and Brazilian Portuguese.

**How does the Office for Ministerial Conduct ensure that parishes and schools are complying with the screening and training requirements of the Policy?** In 2006, a Compliance Coordinator and an assistant to the Compliance Coordinator were added to our staff. They are responsible for overseeing a process that ensures that the parishes, schools, and diocesan camps are screening and training employees and volunteers who regularly work with minors. In 2006, site visits were made to all 108 parishes and 25 schools to review these requirements. The Compliance Coordinator has developed and is implementing a plan that will involve thorough site re-visits of all parishes, schools, and camps

and implementation of a secure, shared safe environment database.

**What are some ways that the Church has changed in the way it handles matters involving sexual abuse of minors since the beginning of 2002?**

- In 2002, only a few people recognized themselves as responsible for reporting the abuse of a minor by church personnel. Today, all Catholics share responsibility for reporting suspicions to civil and church authorities.
- Today, clergy and laity -- including a lay review board, social worker, and professional investigator -- review all reports of sexual abuse of a minor and collaborate in responding to persons who make reports, in determining if a minor was harmed, and in addressing the reported conduct with the accused person.
- Today, more than 15,000 people in diocesan parishes, schools, and institutions have been trained to know the warning signs of abuse and to report suspicions to authorities.
- Today, every report of the abuse of a minor to church officials, regardless of when it occurred, is reported to civil authorities.
- In February 2002, there was one assigned priest known to have abused a minor in the past. Today, there is no priest in ministry who has been credibly accused of abusing a minor.

**How is the work of the Church reviewed and by whom?**

Since 2003, the US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has conducted annual audits to assess compliance with the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People and has issued public reports following the audits (found at [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org)). The Charter requires that

dioceses report all allegations of sexual abuse of a minor to the civil authorities and establish policies to prevent and address allegations of sexual abuse of a minor. Future audits conducted by the USCCB will be expected to assess not only the extent to which dioceses and eparchies have established policies, procedures, and programs in accordance with the Charter, but also the effectiveness of the administration of these policies, procedures, and programs. The Office for Ministerial Conduct has also been subject to regular review by the Diocesan Review Board and has been subject to audits by the Office of the Attorney General.

**What has the Church done to notify the public about how to make a report of sexual abuse of a minor by church personnel?**

The Office for Ministerial Conduct publishes reporting information on its website ([www.catholicchurchnh.org](http://www.catholicchurchnh.org)), in media releases, and in newspaper advertisements. The diocesan staff also works with parish and school leaders to publish reporting information in parish bulletins, in its policies, in its training and educational materials, and on posters displayed prominently in diocesan parishes and schools.

**What are some of the other programs and initiatives of the Office for Ministerial Conduct?**

On an annual basis, the Office holds a state-wide Safe Environment Conference for all Safe Environment Coordinators, Safe Environment Council members, pastors, principals, and camp directors. In addition, the Office issues three Safe Environment Newsletters each year. The diocesan staff is also working with representatives of child protection agencies, the US Attorney's Office, and others to develop a public service campaign on child safety and abuse prevention.



**Office for Healing and Pastoral Care**

The Office for Healing and Pastoral Care provides pastoral outreach, timely assistance, support and resources to those individuals and families who have been affected by the sexual abuse of a minor. Services and assistance are provided in an accepting, caring and compassionate manner, with respect for the privacy of those who seek assistance.

The goal of the pastoral ministry to adult survivors of child sexual abuse, especially to those abused by church personnel, is to assist them in seeking healing from the Lord in and from the Church. The ultimate goal is to ensure that every survivor is heard, assisted, and optimally provided a parish community in which they can continue their journey of faith with the Lord. The model developed in the Diocese of Manchester acknowledges the unique nature of the journey of each survivor while also recognizing the assistance that solidarity with other adult survivors and the wider Church provides them. The active presence of adult survivors in the life and ministry of the Church has already proven to be a treasured gift to all the Christian faithful in New Hampshire.

**Child Safety Reporting**

If you know of or suspect abuse or neglect of a minor (under 18 yrs.), you **must report it** to the NH Division for Children, Youth and Families: 1-800-894-5533 or 603-271-6556.

If you have experienced abuse by someone representing the Catholic Church, you may contact the Office for Healing and Pastoral Care of the Diocese of Manchester: 603-668-0014 or 800-475-5585 ext. 233. **For information about the additional reporting requirements of Church personnel, see [www.catholicchurchnh.org/docs/doc180.pdf](http://www.catholicchurchnh.org/docs/doc180.pdf)**

**Pastoral Support offered by the Office of Healing and Pastoral Care**

- provides prompt, compassionate, professional response and follow-up to persons who make reports and to their family and friends
- offers referrals for counseling services and pastoral care including the provision of such counseling services from N.H. Catholic Charities
- coordinates support groups for adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse
- coordinates regular retreat experiences for adult survivors of child sexual abuse
- facilitates pastoral interviews with Bishop McCormack
- coordinates appropriate pastoral responses to parishes affected by reports of sexual misconduct by a priest, deacon or other minister from their community
- develops and oversees *Bethany: A Place of Healing and New Life*, a mutual help support group for adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse.

**Education and Training**

Age Group	Program	Participants
Adults	<i>Protecting God's Children</i>	since 2001 15,000+
Children & Youth	Circles of Care	since 2006 26,000+
preK - grade 6	Safe & Sound All Around	since 2005 1,800+

To learn more about our safe environment programs and to download parent guides, visit the diocesan website: [www.catholicchurchnh.org](http://www.catholicchurchnh.org) (under child safety)