

Background Evaluations of Parish and School Employees and Volunteers in Regular Contact with Children

This edition of the HR Connect is intended to provide an overview of the *USCCB Charter for the Protection of Children & Young People, Article 13*, regarding Background Evaluations for employees and volunteers in regular contact with Children.

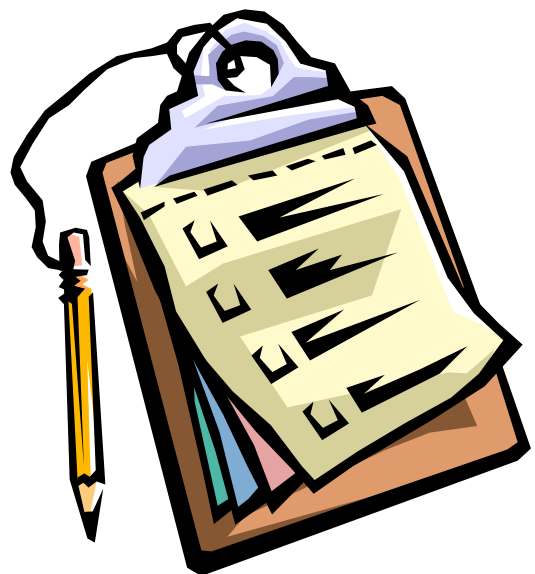
The importance of conducting background evaluations for employees and volunteers who have regular contact with children cannot be overemphasized. *The Bishops' Charter, Article 13*, specifically identifies the commitment we have to conduct background evaluations, including the use of government agencies on individuals that have regular contact with children or youth.

Article 13. Dioceses will evaluate the background of all diocesan and parish personnel who have regular contact with minors. Specifically, they will utilize the resources of law enforcement and other community agencies...

To address this commitment, the Archdiocese has implemented the “Policy and Procedures Regarding Fingerprinting and other Background Checks for Employees, Clergy and Volunteers Who Work with Children or Youth.” For easy reference, see Exhibit A in the Parish or School Employee Handbooks.

In addition to the State mandated fingerprinting of school employees, the Archdiocesan policy identifies specific positions that require the individuals to be fingerprinted and checked against FBI and DOJ records. Those positions include:

- Directors/Coordinators of Religious Education and paid Catechists
- Directors/Coordinators of Youth Ministry (Programs)
- Directors of Children’s Choir
- Regularly assigned School Yard Duty Workers and Teachers Aides
- Directors of Youth Athletics/Head Coaches



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The emphasis of fingerprinting certain individuals has been well documented at the local and Archdiocesan levels. The background evaluations of volunteers have always been part of the Fingerprinting policy. However, in the past, the policy only required individuals to agree to “undergo the fingerprinting if this were considered necessary.” The new directive, as stated in a letter from Archbishop Levada, dated November 12, 2004, is that a mandatory background evaluation including the use of resources provided by government agencies will now become part of the background evaluation.



To accomplish this new requirement, Parishes and Schools must have **employees** and **volunteers** (those not required by the policy to be fingerprinted) who have regular contact with children or youth complete and sign a form that authorizes the Archdiocese to check with government agencies regarding the individual’s suitability to work with children or youth. Those completed forms are then forwarded to the Office of Human Resources for parish employees and volunteers, or to the Department of Catholic Schools for school employees and volunteers for processing.

For guidance of defining “regular contact” with children, please refer to the Fingerprinting Policy. If you are unsure if the individual has “regular contact” with children, we recommend that they undergo a background evaluation. It is better to “over” comply” than to “under comply.” It is our responsibility to select employees and volunteers who can be trusted to provide a safe environment for our children.

Several of our parishes have only identified a small number of employees or volunteers that should undergo the new level of background evaluation, while other parishes have identified many more employees or volunteers (well over 50 at some parishes) who have regular contact with children or youth. Background evaluations should be conducted on all individuals assisting in Youth Ministries; Religious Education programs; Nursery and Pre-school programs; Extended Care or Day Care programs; Children’s Theater and youth activities; Sports programs (i.e. Assistant Coaches). Note: Head Coaches must be fingerprinted per Archdiocesan policy.



Please review your employees and volunteers to be sure that all names have been submitted using either the employee “Background Check Authorization Form” or for volunteers, the “Application Form for Persons Volunteering to Work with Children or Youth.” Please submit the forms appropriately to the Office of Human Resources or the Department of Catholic Schools who will conduct the evaluation on behalf of the parishes and schools.

We hope you find the above information helpful. As always, the HR Team is here to assist. If you have any questions or need additional information or assistance, please contact the Office of Human Resources at (415) 614-5538.