
Screening, Background, and Reference Checks

- 4.0** Diocesan applicants for the priesthood or permanent diaconate, clergy seeking incardination in the Diocese, clergy or religious seeking authorized ministry or residence in the Diocese, and employees and volunteers are screened for their fitness to work with minors.
- 4.1** The following prospective personnel of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston may be asked to complete an informational questionnaire which asks specific questions of those (all paid and volunteer) who will work directly with children: school staff, clergy, religious, parish staff, child-care agency or program personnel, youth ministry personnel, and seminarians. If a questionnaire is used as a condition for clergy assignment, employment or volunteer service, the responsibility for seeing that these forms are completed and forwarded to the Office of Safe Environment rests with the pastor or his delegate, or, where appropriate, the designated supervisor in a central school.
- 4.2** Completed questionnaires shall be reviewed by the Safe Environment Coordinator and, as appropriate, investigated by the Process Administrator.
- 4.3** In hiring employees who will work with minors, specific inquiries are made of former employers and persons listed as references as to the applicant's fitness to work with minors.
- 4.4** Superiors of religious communities who have members seeking to minister in the Diocese are required to state clearly in writing that the Superior is unaware, after careful inquiry, of anything in the individual's background that would render the individual unsuitable to work with minors.
- 4.5** Superiors of religious communities who are proposing individual religious for ministry or residence in Diocesan parishes or other Diocesan institutions as well as the Superiors of those religious simply requesting priestly faculties in the Diocese, are required to state clearly in writing that there is no history which would render the individual unsuitable to work with minors.
- 4.6** Bishops of Diocesan priests from other Dioceses ministering or residing in a Diocesan parish or institution, as well as the Bishops of those priests simply requesting priestly faculties in the Diocese, are required to present the same written assurances.
- 4.7** In the screening process, the good reputation and right to privacy of the individual in question will be safeguarded.

Compliance with West Virginia Law

- 5.0** The Diocese complies with West Virginia laws regarding reporting of suspected child abuse to civil authorities.
- 5.1** Under West Virginia law, the following persons are mandated to report suspected child abuse: 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, law-enforcement official, or member of the clergy.
- Additionally, any other person may make a report if such person has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been abused or neglected.
- 5.2** The Diocese will promptly comply with any applicable reporting requirements governing abuse or neglect of children and will cooperate fully with civil authorities investigating reports of child abuse or neglect. Responsibility for compliance with such reporting requirements shall remain exclusively with the Diocese. The Diocesan Review Board shall only address the Diocesan response to the personnel issues related to such complaints.