

## **Policy Clarifications for the Diocesan/Parish Background Checks for Volunteers and Employees**

These policy clarifications are provided to help all parish (church and school) volunteers and employees understand the background check process and the responsibilities of the individuals involved in order to insure the safety of the children under our care. The Diocese Office of Protection for Children and Young People (OPCYP) has the right and responsibility to audit our records at anytime, as well as discontinue any program found to have non-compliant volunteers or employees working with minors.

### Who Needs to be Background Check Compliant?

- Adult volunteers (defined as 18 years old or older) having "substantial contact with children"
- ALL paid employees (regardless of their level of contact with children)

### What Does "Substantial Contact With Children" Mean?

**"Substantial contact with children"** (as defined by the OPCYP) is **contact that is not incidental** or where the service is such, that it is reasonable to think, that the person may at some time, have contact with children **outside the sight or hearing of other responsible adults**. Whether or not an individual has the possibility of substantial contact is determined by the Pastor and/or School Principal. **The length of voluntary service is irrelevant** (i.e., even if volunteering 1-2 times a year).

### What Does a Potential Volunteer Need to Do to Become Compliant?

#### **1. Complete our online *Request a Background Check Packet* form**

- a. Go to [www.olgcva.org](http://www.olgcva.org)
- b. Click *Outreach*
- c. Click *Opportunities to Serve*
- d. Click *Volunteering with Children*
- e. Click the blue button to *Request a Background Check Packet or to Reactivate or Transfer a Previous Check*
- f. Complete and submit the request form. You will receive an email when your packet has been mailed.

#### **2. Correctly complete the forms in the background check packet**

- a. Code of Conduct (Revised 10/04/12)
- b. E/V Criminal Background History Check Authorization Form
- c. VA Dept./Social Services/Central Registry Release of Info. Form (Revised 08/15)
- d. Questionnaire (6 pages)
- e. Acknowledgment of Receipt (23 pages) - sign and submit only page 23
- f. Attend one (4-hour) VIRTUS Training (*Protecting God's Children Program*)  
**(within 45 days from the date the paperwork begins being processed)**
- g. View the online training, *Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse*, every 3-years

## Useful Information

1. When someone completes all of the requirements, he/she is considered "**Fully Compliant**" or "**in full compliance,**" **NOT "VIRTUS compliant."** VIRTUS only refers to one part of the whole process, and using this term has confused individuals into thinking that they are fully compliant after only attending the training. Anyone who is still missing a requirement or who hasn't cleared all of the forms is considered "Not Fully Compliant."
2. The paperwork portion of the requirements enables the OPCYP to search for PRIOR HISTORY of abuse or suspicious behavior, while the VIRTUS Training portion enables the volunteer/employee to learn what behaviors are typical of abuse victims and perpetrators, in order to take an active role in PREVENTING and REPORTING suspicious behavior. Therefore, both portions of the requirements are necessary. Please read the attachment from the Commonwealth of Virginia, Dept. of Social Services concerning the Child Abuse and Neglect Mandated Reporting Law.

## Leaders' Responsibilities

Ministry/Group leaders are responsible for:

1.
  - a. Reviewing all background check email correspondence from the Child Protection Liaison and **updating** their own volunteer records accordingly.
  - b. **Informing** their volunteers of any status changes (whether someone can now volunteer or no longer volunteer) and **following up** with their volunteers as needed.
  - c. Review their quarterly Volunteer Status Reports for accuracy and **reply back** to the  
  
Child Protection Liaison BY EMAIL with any corrections, additions, or deletions to their reports BEFORE their designated due date.
2. Since the OPCYP automatically runs internal renewals on all active volunteers and employees and the parish or school is charged a fee for each renewal, **it is very important that the leaders notify the Child Protection Liaison of any deletion to your volunteer/employee list ASAP.** If adding a former volunteer to your list, **don't assume that because someone has been a volunteer or employee in the past, that he/she is still active and eligible to volunteer or work now.** The person may have been moved to an "inactive" status at some point, and a renewal might be required prior to that person volunteering or working again. The renewal process may take several weeks to clear.

## Volunteer/Employee Status Categories

### **Potential Volunteer/Employee - NOT eligible to volunteer/work with children**

Someone who wishes to volunteer/work but who has NOT received a background check packet yet. **Potential volunteers should complete the online form, *Request a Background Check Packet*.**

### **Non-Compliant Volunteer/Employee - NOT eligible to volunteer/work with children**

Someone who has been mailed or personally given a background check packet but who has NOT completed the forms correctly and/or completely. **Leaders should follow up.**

### **In-Process Volunteer/Employee - NOT eligible to volunteer/work with children**

Someone whose paperwork has been sent to the OPCYP for processing. The ministry/group leaders will receive an email from Tammy when this occurs. **The background check process can take 4-8 weeks to clear all of the proper channels.** Tammy checks the Diocesan Compliance Reports for compliance status changes once a week and more often as needed or requested.

### **Temporarily Compliant Volunteer/Employee - Eligible to volunteer/work with children**

Someone who has cleared a specific part of the background check and received a temporary waiver from the OPCYP to be eligible to volunteer with children. The ministry/group leaders will receive an email from Tammy when this occurs. **Leaders should notify their volunteer.** This volunteer either has additional paperwork in process or needs to complete another requirement in order to become fully compliant. **There may be a time-limit on being temporarily compliant** which can vary according to what is still needed. For example, the person will be considered non-compliant again if he/she doesn't attend a VIRTUS training within the 45-day grace period - no exceptions!

### **Fully Compliant Volunteer/Employee - Eligible to volunteer/work with children**

Someone who is currently active in one or more ministries/groups, has completed all the requirements correctly and completely, and all of their forms have cleared. No email will be sent for this status change if a "Temporarily Compliant" email was previously sent.

### **Inactive Volunteer/Employee - NOT eligible to volunteer/work with children**

Someone who was previous fully compliant at one time, but who does NOT currently appear on any Volunteer or Employee Status Reports. *Potential, Non-Compliant, and In-Process* volunteers or employees who did not complete the requirements within 3 months will also be moved to this category.