



THE DIOCESE OF CHARLESTON

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Office of Child Protection Services to Conduct Workshops on Updated Sexual Abuse Policy

CHARLESTON, SC (September 9, 2011) – Bishop Robert E. Guglielmone has announced the adoption of a revised *Policy Concerning Allegations of Sexual Misconduct or Abuse of a Minor by Church Personnel (2012)*. He will sign the updated policy on December 12. The policy will take effect on April 15, 2012. Bishop Guglielmone will celebrate a special Mass the same day in commemoration of Child Abuse Prevention Month.

The Office of Child Protection Services will be conducting workshops across the state in each individual deanery to ensure all Diocesan personnel are aware and familiar with the contents of the revised policy. Those personnel required to attend the deanery workshops include: youth ministers, directors of religious education, safe environment coordinators, safe environment facilitators and Catholic Charity field workers. “I ask everyone required to attend this workshop to do so with an open heart and mind,” said Bishop Robert E. Guglielmone. “These workshops are vital to continuing our mission of educating youth about the love of God in a safe and secure environment. Protecting children from any form of abuse is a top priority for the Diocese. As Church Personnel, it is our obligation to take every step possible to ensure our children’s safety.”

The workshops will give attendees a refresher to the policies and procedures regarding the prevention and investigation of sexual abuse of minors, as well as introduce the additions to the updated policy. The policy is the Diocese’s manual that mandates the screening of Diocesan personnel who may have regular contact with children and the educational program to help Diocesan personnel be aware of the signs of child abuse. It also outlines the Diocese’s response

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when an allegation of child abuse has been made against Diocesan personnel.

This policy replaces the 1994 policy instituted by Bishop David Thompson and the 2002 policy adopted by Bishop Robert Baker. “The Diocese of Charleston has been on the cutting edge of instituting policies which address this terrible reality in society,” said Fr. Titus Fulcher, Director of the Office of Child Protection Services.

Workshop facilitators are Father Fulcher; Bonnie Sigers, Safe Environment Manager; Peter Shahid, Diocesan General Counsel; and Maria Aselage, Director of Media Relations. The workshop schedule is:

- Piedmont Deanery – October 4 from 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. at Prince of Peace Parish in Taylors
- Midlands Deanery – October 4 from 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. at Our Lady of the Hills Parish in Columbia
- Lowcountry Deanery – October 12 from 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. at St. Francis by the Sea Parish on Hilton Head Island
- Coastal Deanery – October 12 from 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. at the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist in Charleston
- Pee Dee Deanery – October 21 from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. at Precious Blood Parish on Pawleys Island

The Office of Child Protection Services will hold the workshop for other groups within the Diocese including priests, deacons, seminarians, principals and Chancery staff. The supervisor in charge of each group will announce the date and time of the workshop to his/her staff members.

For more information on the workshops, please contact the Office of Child Protection Services at (843) 853-2130 ext. 206 or 216, or at frtitus@catholic-doc.org.