

August 2009

Dear St. Bartholomew School Family,

The Diocese of Pittsburgh and St. Bartholomew Parish appreciate your willingness to share your faith, gifts, talents, abilities, and your time for the good of the Church and the spread of the Gospel of Christ.

As part of a continual and united effort to provide safe environments for all God's children, the Diocese of Pittsburgh under the direction of the NCCB (National Conference of Catholic Bishops, United States Catholic Conference) has set standards across the country for all persons, whether clergy, members of consecrated life, or laity, who as an employee or volunteer act in the name of the Church under the auspice of the Diocese of Pittsburgh or one of its parishes. All of the persons described above who have any contact (or potential for contact) or interaction with minors (anyone under the age of 18) must abide by the **Safe Environments for Children Policy**. Contact can be daily, weekly, monthly, seasonally, or sporadically.

In the past, all of the above persons had to obtain a Criminal Record and Child Abuse History background check. Those checks examined any conviction that occurred only in the state of Pennsylvania. With a population that is excessively mobile, we were not able to adequately assure that our most important blessings, our children and youth, were fully protected from those members of society who wish to do them harm.

The private sector also recognized the flaws in prior screening procedures and for instance, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania on April 1, 2007 enacted a national FBI clearance for all teachers licensed in the state.

In concert with this, the Diocese now requires a standardized application for employees and volunteers that include a national screening process. As of June 1, 2007 all parents/guardians/volunteers, chaperones, and coaches who will have one-on-one contact in the school or at any school/church-sponsored event are required to fill out a standardized on-line application, and obtain all other necessary clearances, which includes a Child Abuse History background check. The \$7.00 application fee and the \$10.00 Child Abuse History background check fee will be your responsibility to pay. Your cooperation in completing this application is a testament to your own commitment to safeguarding our children.

You can log onto the Diocese of Pittsburgh website at www.diopitt.org to access the database. The access codeword is "**protect**" and all information is held in confidence and encrypted. Only three people (the Site Administrator, the Principal, and the CCD Administrator) will have access to the applicant's information. Those persons are Donna Lamanna, Linda Pricer, and Colleen Ford. We have been charged to be the gatekeepers to assure that those working with our children have all the required clearances, have attended a **Protecting God's Children Program**, and have **read** and **signed** the **Code of Pastoral Conduct and Safe Environments For Children Policy**. The Code of Pastoral Conduct and the Safe Environments for Children Policy can be accessed on the Diocesan website under the "**Diocesan Abuse Prevention Effort**" heading. A copy of the signed Code of Pastoral Conduct and the Safe Environments for Children Policy **MUST** be submitted to the school office.

If you do not have a computer or are having difficulty registering at home, you can make an appointment with me and complete the application at St. Bartholomew School in the computer lab. Penn Hills Library also has free internet access.

If you need to register here at school, please call me at 412/242-2511 ext. 3 and I will assign you a time. I will also be happy to answer any additional questions you may have about this policy.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Linda L. Pricer
Principal