

Protecting Children and Young People

The priests, educators and staff members of the San Diego Catholic Diocese have no higher responsibility than to protect the children and young people entrusted to their care. That's why, starting in 2003, the Diocese and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops adopted a [series of reforms](#) to prevent the abuse of children and young people.

Under these rules:

- The diocese practices a policy of "Zero Tolerance." Any priest credibly accused of abusing a minor will be reported to law enforcement and immediately removed from ministry. In addition, his faculties will be revoked and he will not be able to publicly function as a priest in San Diego or any other diocese.
- Similar policies apply to any teacher, staff member or volunteer. No one with a credible accusation of abusing a minor will be employed by the Diocese.
- All clergy, religious, staff and volunteers are entered into a database and are subject to background check and fingerprinting that includes continuously updated federal, state and local criminal databases.
- All children attending Catholic schools or receiving religious education classes receive age-appropriate "Safe Environment" training every year to help children protect themselves and to encourage them to report inappropriate behavior by their peers and adults.
- All clergy, religious and staff or any volunteers dealing with children and young people are also required to go through Safe Environment training and to renew their training every 3 years.
- Every year, as many as 50-55,000 students are put through training, as well as 3-4,000 clergy, religious, teachers staff and volunteers.
- Every year, the diocese must submit a report on how it is complying with the Charter and Norms and every three years, the diocese undergoes an on-site audit by an independent auditor.
- The diocese has been in compliance since its very first audit in 2005 and passed its most recent on-site audit last year in 2016.

As part of these reforms, the diocese also created an Independent Review Board to evaluate allegations of abuse and to recommend to the Bishop disciplinary action. The board includes members of law enforcement, mental health, judiciary and a former victim.

Even as these measures are strictly implemented, the diocese's leadership never forgets the terrible wounds the victims of past abuse suffered, as well as their families and parishes. They are doing everything in their power to heal those wounds and to ensure such abuse never happens again.

Click [here](#) to see how these policies shape the operation of Catholic schools today.

Click [here](#) to report abuse or to contact the diocese's Victim Assistance Coordinator.