



# **DIOCESE OF PATERSON**

## **LOCAL CHILD & YOUTH PROTECTION COORDINATOR**

### **PROCEDURE MANUAL**

*Revised July 2019*

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## PREFACE

The purpose of this manual is to assist our local youth protection coordinators (LYPC) in complying with the Diocesan Safe Environment policy. We encourage you to be familiar with our safe environment, social media & code of conduct policies. Please use this manual as a guide when to assist in registering for the Protecting God's Children live training, performing background checks and the recording of the Code of Conduct acknowledgment in addition to managing all of your location's child protection records.

In addition to this manual we encourage you to utilize often the Office of Child & Youth Protection resource page at [www.chancery.rcdop.org/child-protection](http://www.chancery.rcdop.org/child-protection) for the most up to date documents, resources and information in regards to Child Protection & providing a safe environment for our children. This webpage is intended for our local youth protection coordinators and other with the Diocese that work with children not the general public.

We hope you find this manual useful. *As always if you ever have any questions regarding any procedures or policies please do not hesitate to contact the Office of Child & Youth Protection.*

## WHAT IS REQUIRED?

### Maintain Files

Beginning 2-1-2018, hard copy files will no longer be required to be retained for anyone who has registered through the new VirtusOnline/Fastrax system after this date. Once properly registered, all records will be electronically stored through the Virtus Online Tracking System. Files currently on hand prior to this date will still need to be maintained as outlined below.

For all records **prior** to 2-1-2018, the Child Protection Coordinator at each location must have a separate Child Protection file for each Employee, Educator or Volunteer who has regular contact with children or minors. This applies at both the Parish and School level. Since these files contain personal and confidential information, each Coordinator must sign a Confidentiality Agreement. It is important the files are secure and that only specifically authorized persons as specified in the Confidentiality Agreement are given access to them on a need to know basis. This file should be a separate file/folder from other employee/personnel documents.

Each file must have the following **REQUIRED** documents:

- Signed Consent and Disclosure Form if background information was entered directly by the coordinator.
- Results of Internet Background Check and/or NJ State Fingerprint Clearance Letter,
- Signed Code of Conduct Acknowledgement, and
- A Certificate confirming completion of VIRTUS program, "Protecting God's Children".
- Keep 2 separate groups of files, Current and Inactive.

For **Priests, Deacons and Seminarians**, the above documents are kept in the Chancery Office. Local parishes and schools are not required to keep any files for Priests, Deacons or Seminarians.

For the **School Educator and/or Employee**, an Internet background check must be completed while waiting for the results of the Department of Education Fingerprint Clearance. NOTE: It is both Diocesan Policy and State Law that all School Educators and/or Employees have a fingerprint clearance letter issued by the NJ State Department of Education with the current school's name (or identification code) and location listed.

## **Communicate Changes**

The Coordinator is also required to regularly update the Diocesan Child Protection Office of any changes or updates to the files for each individual. This information is sent to the Diocesan Office using the PGC Change Word Form or by simply providing the information via email. Local Coordinators, upon request may be given limited access to make updates to the Virtus Online database for their location.

## **Review of Reports/Records**

It shall be the responsibility of the Local Coordinator to review on a regular basis all of the reports and records of their parish/school in the new Virtus Online Tracking System. They are to ensure that the records are current and up to date and in compliance with all volunteer/employees working with children in accordance with our Safe Environment policy.

## **Yearly Self Audit Reports**

Beginning 2-1-2018 the Local Coordinator will be required to submit a yearly self-audit report. The form will be emailed to all coordinators and must be completed by May 31st of each year.

In addition, the Office will conduct internal on-site audits of Parishes and Schools throughout the Diocese on a rotating basis.

## **Retention/Purging of Records**

The Office of Child & Youth Protection has recently updated its policy on the retention and destruction of inactive paper records & documents. Please visit the Chancery Child Protection Resource Page and view "Child Protection Records/Document Retention Policy".

## **SECTION A - INTERNET BACKGROUND CHECKS**

### **Parish Employees, Parish Volunteers, and School Volunteers**

#### **Why Internet Checks? What about Fingerprint checks?**

Internet background checks are conducted to confirm that an individual does not have a criminal history and in particular crimes against children.

Beginning 2-1-2018 the Diocese will utilize the Selection.com/Fastrax Select as its internet background check provider.

Our Internet Service Provider does a thorough research of individuals based on the criteria we have chosen. Fingerprint checks are required for Priests, Deacons, and Seminarians, as well as Educators and all Employees of Schools. Parish Employees, Parish Volunteers, and School Volunteers need the internet background check only.

In addition, the Fastrax system will automatically perform a re-check every three months for any applicant entered into the system after 2-1-2018.

**The first step in the approval process, even before they begin working /volunteering, for Employees and Volunteers is the Internet criminal history background check. This must be run even for School Educators and/or Employees as a safeguard until fingerprint results have been returned.**

#### **What if the individual was previously fingerprinted/background checked?**

For volunteers and parish employees only, we can accept copies of previous fingerprint clearance letters **IF** the clearance is dated less than 3 years ago. We also accept NJ State Licenses for Nursing, Social Workers, and other medical professions. These licenses are typically issued for 2 years and must be current in order to accept them.

When in doubt, it is always a good idea to simply do an internet background check, it is quick and simple.

#### **What is the Actual Internet Background Process?**

Prior to an individual beginning their new role, we need to check the individual's background for any criminal history. Getting an Internet check done is an easy process and often only takes minutes for results. **The rule is a person should never attend Virtus training without having a criminal history background check.**

#### **Background Check through the New Registration Process**

If the applicant completes the background application process themselves online all the Local Coordinator is required to do is check the record in Virtus Online to make sure the date of clearance is posted in the User Record. This should be done automatically once the check-in is complete and cleared. You can also check for a clearance in the Fastrax Dashboard as well.

## **Background Check OUTSIDE the New Registration Process**

If you have to perform an internet background check OUTSIDE new Virtus Online Registration process, then follow the procedure below, for instance if they have been out of ministry for longer than 3 years they will need a new background completed.

**THIS PROCEDURE IS ONLY IF YOU HAVE TO PERFORM A CHECK ON SOMEONE PREVIOUSLY VIRTUS TRAINED.** Otherwise, follow the registration & background check procedure outlined in **Section E**.

1. Access the Virtus Online Administration tab
2. Search or locate the profile/person you need to update, click the background check tab, click "Prompt for Background Check". **If they do not have a email contained in their profile you must add one under their general tab**
3. Have the volunteer/employee log into their Virtus profile and they should be prompted to complete a new background check. You may need to provide the User ID information as many have never logged into Virtus since they originally registered. In most cases the default password is lower case "password" if not they will need to click "Need Login Information" enter user name or email and they can recover a password.
4. Advise the volunteer/employee while in their profile to please update their information especially emails.

## **SECTION B - FINGERPRINT/ BACKGROUND CHECK CLEARANCE**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **Who needs to be fingerprinted?**

Priests, Seminarians, Deacons, School Educators (Full time, Part time and Substitute, includes Principals) and other School Employees (e.g. Coaches, Counselors, Secretaries, Kitchen Workers, Maintenance, etc.)

#### **Who keeps the fingerprint results for Priests Deacons and Seminarians?**

These results are kept in the Chancery Office, along with the signed Code of Conduct and training certificate.

#### **What about Parish Employees?**

Parish employees only need an Internet Background Check which should be complete through Sterling Talent Solutions.

#### **What about School and Parish Volunteers?**

These individuals must have an Internet Background check.

**Who keeps the fingerprint results for school employees?**

These results are kept by the Coordinator at the parish/school. You may have one location for both school and parish files or you may have school files at the school and parish files at the parish.

**Why can't I just get a background check for a teacher, she's a substitute?**

Not only is it a Diocesan requirement, but it is the law in the State of New Jersey that all Educators and Employees of Schools be fingerprinted, and that process must be done through the **NJ State Department of Education. (DOE)**

**I have a new teacher who is waiting for their NJ DOE clearance letter. Is the teacher approved to work with children and/or minors?**

No. However, the teacher will be **temporarily approved** if you run the Internet Background Check.

**I have a volunteer who was fingerprinted in 2005, left in 2008 and returned to work with children, in 2012, more than three years later. Do I need to re-fingerprint or Internet Background check?**

Yes. **Volunteers who return must be Internet Background Checked** if the fingerprints are more than three years old. They may not begin until clear results are received. The returning individual should sign a new Code of Conduct. The rule is the person was out of ministry/employment for more than 3 years, a new internet check and code of conduct should be obtained. Retraining in Virtus is not needed at this time.

**Do I need a fingerprint letter with my school name if the teacher works and/or substitutes at various locations?**

It is not possible to have more than one school on a Clearance Letter from the DOE. Just be sure to have a copy of a current Clearance Letter. However, we recommend for your protection, that you run an Internet Background Check.

**What if the individual has a criminal history in their background or the check does not come back as clear?**

The Diocese will generally be notified within 4 hours if there is an issue with the background check. The Diocesan attorney will be consulted and the parish/school and individual will be notified of the findings.

**Who pays for the background check?**

Beginning 2-1-2018 Selection.com will invoice the Diocese directly for each background check.

## SECTION C – FINGERPRINTS FOR SCHOOL EDUCATOR and/or EMPLOYEE

Go to <https://chancery.rcdop.org/child-protection> , then click the link for School Finger Info under Catholic School Documents for the latest and most current information.

## SECTION D - PASTORAL CODE OF CONDUCT

### What is the Code of Conduct?

The ***Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*** was established by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in June, 2002. The Pastoral Code of Conduct is a document that outlines the standards of behavior and integrity for anyone who works with children.

All Diocesan Priests, Deacons, Seminarians, Employees, Educators and Volunteers at the Parish, School, Agency or Diocesan level are required to read and sign this document. **In addition, anyone out of ministry/employment for more than 3 years must re-acknowledge the code by completing the acknowledgment page.**

### Securing a Signed Code of Conduct

1. Beginning 2-1-2018 the Code of Conduct is now completed on-line with the Virtus Online Registration Process "Protecting God's Children" registration and internet background check process.

If you are updating a Code of Conduct for an inactive volunteer/employee and are re-activating them, follow the procedure below:

5. Access the Virtus Online Administration tab
6. Search or locate the profile/person you need to update, click the background check tab, click "Prompt for Required Documents". **If they do not have a email contained in their profile you must add one under their general tab**
7. Have the volunteer/employee log into their Virtus profile and they should be prompted to complete a new Code of Conduct. You may need to provide the User ID information as many have never logged into Virtus since they originally registered. In most cases the default password is lower case "password" if not they will need to click "Need Login Information" enter user name and they can recover a password.
8. Advise the volunteer/employee while in their profile to please update their information especially emails.



## SECTION E -"VIRTUS" TRAINING CLASSES

### What is the VIRTUS Class?

**Virtus-Protecting All Children™** identifies best practices programs designed to help prevent wrongdoing and promote "right doing" within organizations. The programs empower organizations and people to better control risk and improve the lives of all those who interact with the organization. Protecting All Children™ training programs are comprehensive and multi-dimensional--incorporating proven best practice standards for the prevention of child sexual abuse and other wrongdoing by employees, volunteers, and others who interact with children within the environment. ***Please advise all attendees that the training is intended to be a 3-hour program.***

### How to register for a class:

1. Effective 2-1-2018 the live training registration, Internet Background check process, and our Code of Pastoral Conduct have all been combined into one platform.
2. The registrant must access the website: [www.virtusonline.org](http://www.virtusonline.org) and click on the word REGISTRATION in the left column of the page, and follow all the prompts. **IMPORTANT!!! ALL NEW VOLUNTEERS/EMPLOYEES MUST FOLLOW THIS PROCEDURE ONLINE.** If the volunteer/employee does not have internet access, every effort must be made to provide them access at the parish/school level. ***The step by step instructions are available on the Chancery Child Protection page, and are identified as "Virtus Volunteer Registration Instructions" which can be used to handout to applicants.***
3. **We strongly urge all potential attendees to register online prior to attending a session.**
4. **After receiving a cleared Internet background check,** we allow the individual 90 days to attend the VIRTUS live training. **We suggest you keep this for internal use only and DO NOT publicly announce this to potential applicants as many may procrastinate getting to a session...you should always be telling the applicant to get to a session as soon as possible.** **This allowance is for internal purposes and should always be the exception, never the rule. All individuals should attend a session as soon as possible after their background check is complete otherwise they will appear in your records as not in compliance.**

5. An individual can see a list of classes at [www.virtusonline.org](http://www.virtusonline.org) or the Diocesan Website at [www.rcdop.org](http://www.rcdop.org). Coordinators can also use [www.chancery.rcdop.org](http://www.chancery.rcdop.org). Scroll down to links and click on "PGC Upcoming Training Schedule"
6. Certificates are only issued to participants upon request. After 2-1-2018 the Local Coordinator does not have to retain the certificate. Once the individual attends the training class, the Child Protection office will update the individual's Virtus records and move them to an approved "active" status. The Local Coordinator should receive an email from Virtus that the user was approved.

**NOTE:** The Diocesan office receives sign-in sheets for all attendees of the VIRTUS classes. Once received, they are input into the database as having attended the class, and the Local Coordinator can immediately view the user in their parish/school records as having attending the required training.

## Retraining

We are in the process of recruiting additional PGC facilitators. Once we have an adequate staff it is our goal to begin live retraining for anyone who received the initial training from 2003-2014. Anyone trained after 2014 will be offered the online training to recertify.

If you know of anyone that would like to be a facilitator please let the child protection office know.

## **SECTION F - REVIEW OF REPORTS/RECORDS**

Beginning 2-1-2018 it is the responsibility of each Local Coordinator to review their location records within the Virtus Online Tracking System to ensure that all volunteers/employees are in compliance with our Safe Environment policies. The Local Coordinator must obtain all ministry/employee lists within their location for those individual who work with children. The Local Coordinator must ensure that those lists match the records contained in Virtus.

1. Log into Virtus, Click on "Compliance Report", select "Master Report", check off all the parameters you want to view which should include Protecting God's Children for Adults, Background Checks,(I would select all as many had fingerprints done many years ago) and code of conduct. Instruction can also be found on the Chancery Child Protection Webpage listed as "Virtus Local Admin Instructions"
2. Until 7-7-2018, if there are discrepancies and information needs to be communicated with the Diocesan Child Protection Office, the Local Coordinator can continue to submit updates/changes on the PGC Change Form or simply email the information directly. We also accept changes made directly onto the report. Make the changes by printing clearly, and then email the report back Joanne Mikolajczyk, or if you prefer, you can scan the report with changes and email to [pgc@patersondiocese.org](mailto:pgc@patersondiocese.org).

## **SECTION G-MANAGING THE VIRTUS ONLINE TRACKING SYSTEM**

Effective 2-1-2018 all Local Coordinators will have local administrator access to the new Virtus Online Tracking System. At this time, all coordinators will only have access to view their parish/school records and view/print out reports. Upon request Coordinators may be provided limited access to edit & update their parish/school records. Anything that needs to be modified that the Local Coordinator cannot access should always be communicated with our office to fix and/or modify. Our office can transfer records between parishes, add additional locations to a volunteer/employee record, etc. Keep in mind that you will always be able to see active/inactive records. We never delete a record they may change to "inactive" or get transferred to another location on occasion.

Please review the Virtus Local Administrators Guide which can be found at our Office of Child & Youth Protection resource webpage at [www.chancery.rcdop.org/child-protection](http://www.chancery.rcdop.org/child-protection)

## DIOCESE OF PATERSON CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

By virtue of my position at \_\_\_\_\_

Please Print Name of Location)

I will have access to personal information concerning current and prospective employees and volunteers including consumer reports and criminal history background information.

I understand and agree to follow the following rules:

1. All documents related to criminal history background checks, including consumer reports, must be maintained in a confidential manner and stored in a locked cabinet.
2. Such information may be accessed and reviewed as needed only by the Youth Protection Coordinator, the Pastor/Administrator, Principal, or other institutional Head as the case may be, the Diocesan Office of Child and Youth Protection, the Diocesan Attorney, and in the case of schools, the Diocesan Catholic Schools Office. An individual may review their own criminal history reports and consumer reports relating shall be given copies of those documents upon request.
3. Access to information stored on a computer must be similarly limited and the Information protected from disclosure to unauthorized individuals.
4. The Diocesan Office of Child and Youth Protection and the Diocesan Attorney must be consulted before information may be disclosed to anyone other than those individuals identified in paragraph 2.

I will follow these rules and will maintain the confidentiality of all criminal history background check information, including consumer reports. This means not only the documents cannot be shown to unauthorized individuals, but that I may not disclose information contained in the documents to unauthorized individuals. This obligation applies to prospective employees and volunteers whether or not they actually become employees or volunteers, employees and volunteers during their terms of service, and former employees and volunteers.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_:

Email: \_\_\_\_\_