September 23, 2015
Feast of the Conception of St. John the Forerunner and Baptist

"Keep me as the apple of Your eye; Protect me under the shadow of Your wings" (Ps 18:8)

Reverend Clergy and Presvyteres, Esteemed Metropolis and Parish Council Members, Dedicated Volunteers and Youth Workers, and the Faithful of the Holy and God-Protected Metropolis of Pittsburgh,

The protection of our youth is of the highest importance for all the ministries of our Metropolis and its Parishes. This has been true since the very first days of our various programs (Summer Camp, athletics, folk dance, etc.), and has been likewise prioritized in our communities. Recent changes in the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania have caused us to consider how our priority should be actualized within our Metropolis, each member Church, and the various organizations. These changes have made the laws within Pennsylvania among the most comprehensive and protective in the nation, and reflect a desire to see that all children find enjoyment in organized activities (schools, camps, etc.) that are safe and well-run.

After a thorough review of the new statues and requirements, a legal committee appointed to advise the Metropolis recommended a policy that has been reviewed and revised first by the Metropolis Youth Commission, and subsequently by the Metropolis Council. I write to inform you that I approved this policy and do hereby pronounce it effective immediately.

The policy applies to all Clergy, paid staff, and volunteers, working on either the Metropolis or the Parish level:

1. **Mandated Reporters:** Any adult (18 years of age or older) who has direct contact with children (i.e. care, supervision, guidance, control, or routine/habitual interaction with children as part of a regularly scheduled program) is a mandated reporter, and must submit to all the provisions of this policy.

2. **Background Checks:** All mandated reporters must undergo 3 levels of background checks, which must be less than 3 years old and renewed every 36 months:
   a. **State Criminal Background Check**
   b. **State Child Abuse Check**
   c. **FBI Fingerprinting and Background Check***
      * See notes in subsequent documentation regarding exceptions to the FBI Check.

3. **Armatus® Online Training:** All mandated reporters shall undergo periodic Armatus online training courses. (A course schedule will be published by the Metropolis Youth & Young Adult Ministries Office.) Armatus teaches youth workers how to keep those under your care and in your programs safe. The courses explain how abusers operate
and how victims suffer from abuse. Advanced and program-specific courses teach employees and volunteers how to reduce the risk of abuse in schools, camps, churches, youth sports, and other organizations.

4. **Reporting Training:** All mandated reporters shall undergo training, either through online courses or self-directed review of state materials, on how to report abuse in their states and in the states where they will be volunteering.**

**The requirements are state-specific and will be explained in the subsequent documents.**

5. **Documentation:** Documentation of successful completion of courses and background checks must be maintained. The individual staff members or volunteers will keep original copies. They will bring these originals to the parish (or Metropolis or association) where they will be copied by a parish official; the official will note on the copy that they have seen the original.***

***Instructions for official notation will be provided in subsequent documentation.

6. **Application:** This policy applies to all our Metropolis ministries, parishes, and associated organizations across the entire Metropolis.

This is a far-reaching policy that has major implications for our parish ministries. It should be noted that these types of standards are being expected increasingly by our states and organizations, and represent best practices to keep our children safe when they are in the care of our Metropolis and Parish ministries. The costs in time and money are worth the security provided by the policy.

With Archpastoral blessings and love in the Lord,

+ Metropolitan Savas
+ Savas
Metropolitan of Pittsburgh

**Enclosures:**

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2. Pennsylvania Procedures and Resources pages 5-6
3. Ohio Procedures and Resources pages 7-8
4. West Virginia Procedures and Resources pages 9-10
5. Armatus Information page 11
6. Instructions for Priests and Parish Leadership page 12
7. Affidavit in Place of Obtaining FBI Clearance for PA Volunteers insert/2 pages
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Metropolis Youth Protection Policy Summary – “The Policy”

- This policy covers all Metropolis and Parish-related youth activities in the whole Metropolis of Pittsburgh.
  o Whatever policies in your state (OH, PA, or WV) are less stringent than The Policy, then The Policy is to be followed in those cases.
  o Whatever policies of your state are more stringent than The Policy, then the legal requirements are to be followed in those areas.

- For the purposes of this policy, there are 3 types of ministries and events:
  o Parish-run (PR): Those ministries wholly contained in the life of the parish or its various organizations and groups (i.e. Sunday School, Greek School, parish GOYA chapter, etc.).
  o Metropolis-run, Parish-hosted (M/P): Those activities coordinated by the Metropolis that involve parish groups (i.e. Athletic Tournaments, Folk Dance Festival, etc.)
  o Metropolis-run and hosted (MR): Those ministries wholly directed and hosted by the Metropolis (i.e. Summer Camp, Retreats, etc.)

- Any adult (18 years of age or older) who has “direct contact” with children (i.e. care, supervision, guidance, control, or routine/habitual interaction with children as part of a regularly scheduled program) is a “mandated reporter,” and must submit to all the provisions of this policy.

- Background Checks must be conducted for all mandated reporters, and must be current (i.e. less than 3 years old) and renewed every 36 months. If you are volunteering for fewer than 30 days in a state that you do not reside in, then you must provide proof that you have completed the required checks in your home state in lieu of the ones in the state where you are volunteering.
  o 3 checks are required:
    ▪ State Criminal Background Check
    ▪ State Child Abuse Check
    ▪ FBI Fingerprinting and Background Check
      • All paid staff (clergy, paid camp staff, etc.) must undergo this check.
      • Volunteer staff who have resided in the state in which they are volunteering for 10 years or more may complete a notarized affidavit instead.
      • Volunteer staff who will be volunteering in a state other than where they reside but are doing so for fewer than 30 days are exempt for that state.

- Armatus Training shall be conducted periodically for all mandated reporters on a schedule determined by the Metropolis Youth & Young Adult Ministries Office in consultation with the Youth Commission and Legal Committee

- Reporting Training shall be conducted periodically for all mandated reporters. This will be done in accordance with state laws and resources.

- Proper documentation of both background checks and training for all mandated reporters must be maintained by the appropriate entity:
  o Original documentation verifying the background checks and training must be kept by the individual
Copies of the documentation must reside at the level appropriate for the activity: for PR activities, at the Parish; for MR activities, at the Metropolis; for M/P activities, the parish must have documentation on file, and must demonstrate to the Metropolis (through the procedures specific to each event) that they have the documentation.

Documentation for the clergy will be provided to, and maintained and copied by, the Metropolis Chancellor.

- If you have already completed the documentation for other volunteer programs (i.e. schools, athletic programs) or for other paid positions requiring these, (i.e. teachers, healthcare providers), then you may submit your original documentation previously secured.
Pennsylvania Procedures and Resources

PA Residents Fees for child abuse clearances and criminal background checks required by the Child Protective Services Law will be waived for volunteers working with children. Additionally, the Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) have reduced the cost of both the child abuse and criminal history record checks from $10 to $8 for all other applicants.

Frequently Asked Questions and Legal Resources:
http://keepkidssafe.pa.gov/
https://www.compass.state.pa.us/CWIS/Public/FAQ

PA Criminal Record Check Instructions - The Pennsylvania Criminal Record Check can be done either online or by mail. The online results are available almost immediately, while if you choose to mail the form, it could take up to 8 weeks for the results to be returned to you.

1. To complete the process online, go to https://epatch.state.pa.us and click on “Submit a New Record Check” and follow the instructions. (Note: It will only process completely if you are using Internet Explorer.) Please select “Volunteer” as the Reason for Request. A credit card is required for the processing fee of $10.00. At the end of the process, you will need to print the certification form and submit to your Church Office. The original must be reviewed and then can be copied and the original returned for your records and the copy for the Church records.

2. If you choose the mail-in process, click Criminal Background Check Form (SP4-164) and print out the form. You must submit the completed form with a money order for $10.00 payable to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the results will be mailed to your home. Upon receipt, please bring the clearance to the Church Office.

3. If you have questions about the Pennsylvania State Police Request for Criminal Record Checks form (SP4 164), please call: 717-783-9973 or toll free 1-888-783-7972.

PA Child Abuse History Clearance (CY113) Instructions - The Child Abuse History Clearance can be completed either online or by mail.

1. Requests for clearance statements (now called “certifications”) may be made online at https://www.compass.state.pa.us/CWIS. There is no cost for volunteers and paid employees will be required to pay the $8.00 fee. The first thing you will do is to create a sign-on. You will be asked for your Keystone ID #, this is a number that you will create for yourself.

2. The mail-in form must be completed and mailed to the Department of Public Welfare. The History Clearance form is to be filled out and mailed into the Department of Public Welfare along with a money order for $10, and a copy of your Criminal Record Check and FBI Clearance if you are an out-of-state resident. This form is available online but must be printed off and completed with signature.

3. You need to list all addresses you have lived at since 1975 and everyone who has lived with you at any time since 1975.
4. Check the box marked “Volunteers” as the reason for the request.
5. Do not send cash or a personal check.
6. This clearance takes approximately 5 to 10 weeks and the results are mailed to your home.

FBI Criminal Background Check Instructions in PA

1. The FBI Federal Criminal History Record requires individuals to have fingerprints done digitally at a registered fingerprinting site. You must first register for the process. This can be done either online at [www.pa.cogentid.com/index_dpw.htm](http://www.pa.cogentid.com/index_dpw.htm) or by phone at 1-888-439-2486 (M-F, 8a-6p) prior to going to the fingerprinting site.
2. There is a $28.75 fee for this clearance through the Department of Education. There is an optional $2.50 charge to receive an unofficial copy mailed to your home. Payment may be made online at the time of registration using a debit or credit card.
3. Cogent locations (mostly UPS Stores) maybe found here: [http://www.pa.cogentid.com/ohio/DPW/DPW_map/DPW_Regions_Clickable.html](http://www.pa.cogentid.com/ohio/DPW/DPW_map/DPW_Regions_Clickable.html)
4. Once you have registered, proceed to an approved fingerprinting site to be digitally fingerprinted. You will receive a Registration Number. This number must be provided to the Human Resources office so your results can be retrieved. Please note that you must register prior to going to the fingerprint site.
5. For question about your FBI Clearance, please contact the FBI/Adam Walsh Unit at 717-783-6211 or 1-877-371-5422.

PA Reporting Online Course:
Anyone who (a) resides and volunteers in PA, or (b) who does not reside but will volunteer in PA for more than 30 days, must take the online course for reporting suspected abuse in PA (PA Act 31). Those who do not reside in PA and who will volunteer for fewer than 30 days are strongly encouraged to take the course as well. The course can be taken at [www.reportabusepa.pitt.edu](http://www.reportabusepa.pitt.edu). Print the Certificate of Course Completion to be submitted.
Further information on reporting, and on the law, can be found at [http://keepkidssafe.pa.gov/](http://keepkidssafe.pa.gov/)
Ohio Procedures and Resources

The Ohio Attorney General’s Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) regularly processes about 1 million background checks annually. Through WebCheck, agencies transmit fingerprints and other data electronically to BCI, to be compared against a database of criminal fingerprints to determine if an individual has a criminal record. BCI then issues a background report that help make hiring/volunteering decisions quickly and with confidence.

Frequently Asked Questions and Legal Resources:

http://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/FAQ/Background-Check-FAQs.aspx

OH Criminal Record Check/OH Child Abuse Clearance Instructions

How do I complete a background check if I am in Ohio?

Choose a vendor from this list and contact the vendor for more information or go to:
http://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Services/Business/WebCheck/Webcheck-Community-Listing

The Ohio Attorney General’s Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) regularly processes about 1 million background checks annually. Through WebCheck, agencies transmit fingerprints and other data electronically to BCI, to be compared against a database of criminal fingerprints to determine if an individual has a criminal record. BCI then issues a background report.

FBI Criminal Background Check Instructions in OH

Ohio does not issue FBI checks unless it is for licensed job purposes.

OH Reporting Instructions: Phone: 855 O-H-CHILD

Ohioans who suspect child abuse or neglect now only need to remember on phone number.

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services has launched 855-O-H-CHILD (855-642-4453), an automated telephone directory that will link callers directly to a child welfare or law enforcement office in their county. Reports may be anonymous.

What information do I need to make a report?

- The name and address of the child you suspect is being abused or neglected
- The age of the child
- The name and address of the parents or caretakers
- The name of the person you suspect is abusing or neglecting the child and the address if available
- The reason you suspect the child is being abuse and neglected
- Any other information which may be helpful to the investigation
- You have the option of giving your name or reporting anonymously. Giving your name can help the investigator clarify information. The agency will not give your name to the person suspected of abusing the child.

Please Note: All of the above information is not needed to make a report. If you are not sure you have enough information to report, always err on the safety of the child. Children services screens all reports to determine if there is enough information to investigate.

What happens after a report is made?

In Ohio, after a report is made,

- A child protective services investigator will interview the child, family members & others as deemed appropriate.
- The investigator determines if the child is being abused or is at risk for abuse.
- The case may be referred to local social service agencies, or to juvenile, family or criminal court.

What is a mandated reporter?

A mandated reporter is someone required by law to report if they suspect or know that child abuse if occurring. A list of mandated reporters for Ohio includes:

- Child care workers
- Children Services personnel
- Clergy
- Day care personnel
- School authorities, employees and teachers

(Remember, regardless of the state’s policy on who is a mandated reporter and when they should report, we are implementing a policy Metropolis-wide. We should provide resources so the people know where the reports should go. We should emphasize the parish and Metropolis internal structures - to be utilized once the report has gone to the state.)
West Virginia Procedures and Resources

WV Child Abuse History Clearance Instructions/WV Criminal Record Check Instructions

All WV State Fingerprinting and other services are conducted by MorphoTrust USA. MorphoTrust USA was awarded the contract for the State of WV in August to provide all the screenings for West Virginia. Currently, they serve over 2.5 million customers each year in their nationwide network of locations. They will provide for a live scan (electronic) fingerprinting service that will then be run through the West Virginia State Police check.

The “Regular Background Check” costs $32.50

You may find a location, make an appointment, find forms, review “FAQs” – Frequently Asked Questions, by clicking on the link below:

https://wv.l1enrollment.com/OpenNetworkPortal/spring/customer?execution=e1s1

If you have any questions, please call MorphoTrust USA at (855) 766-7746

FBI Criminal Background Check Instructions in WV

We have applied for permission for FBI checks to be obtained in WV. They are issued by MorphoTrust USA with approval.

Frequently Asked Questions and Legal Resources

WV Reporting Instructions/Materials

Who Must Report?
Anyone may report suspected child abuse or neglect. Under West Virginia Law (WV Code 49-6A-2) certain persons are required to report. These persons include:

- members of the clergy
- youth camp administrator or counselor
- employee, coach or volunteer of an entity that provides organized activities for children

Additionally, West Virginia Law (WV Code 49-6A-2) mandates that any person over the age of eighteen who receives a disclosure from a credible witness or observes any sexual abuse or sexual assault of a child, shall immediately and not more than forty eight hours, report the circumstances or cause a report to be made to the Department and the State Police or other law-enforcement agency having jurisdiction to investigate the report. If the reporter feels that reporting the alleged sexual abuse will expose themselves, the child, the reporter’s children or other children in the subjects household to an increased threat of serious bodily injury, the individual may delay making the report while he or she undertakes measures to remove
themselves or the affected children from the perceived threat of additional harm. The individual must make the report as soon as practical after the threat of harm has been reduced. The law enforcement agency that receives a report regarding sexual abuse must report the allegations to the Department.

West Virginia Law also mandates that in any case where a mandated reporter believes that the child suffered serious physical abuse, the reporter shall also immediately report, or cause a report to be made, to the State Police and any law-enforcement agency having jurisdiction to investigate the complaint.

**Why Should I Report?** The purpose of required reporting is to identify suspected abused and neglected children as soon as possible so that they may be protected from further harm. Child Protective Services cannot act until a report is made.

**Am I Protected if I Report?** West Virginia law provides immunity from civil or criminal liability for persons reporting in good faith (WV Code 49-6A-6).

**How Do I Report?** Reports can be made to the Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline (1-800-352-6513) 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. You may also report alleged sexual abuse or sexual assault, or serious physical abuse to your local law enforcement agency by calling 911.
Armatus Information

The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese contracted with Praesidium, Inc. to provide online training for mandated reporters. The Archdiocese will underwrite the costs associated with the training sessions to assist our parishes. (http://website.praesidiuminc.com/)

Praesidium, Inc. has worked with more than 4,000 organizations and has built a comprehensive array of services that allows organizations to implement “Best Practices” for Youth Protection. Armatus® online training teaches your Volunteers how to keep those in your care, and your programs, safe. Armatus courses use extensive interactivity, video-clips, compelling graphics, and sound effects to fully engage participants. Each course takes between 30 to 45 minutes to complete and includes a content mastery quiz over key elements.

Core Armatus courses explain how abusers operate and how victims suffer. Advanced and Program Specific courses teach employees and volunteers how to reduce the risk of abuse in churches, schools, camps, youth sports and other organizations.

For several years now, Armatus completion has been required of all Camp & Retreat Staff by the Archdiocese Youth Protection Policies. The Metropolis of Pittsburgh will now require that all those who fall under the Eventually, all parishes in the Archdiocese will be required to complete. Several of our Metropolis Parishes have made this a requirement of their parish ministries. (Insurance Companies may lower fees if additional training is in place.) If you are interested in this service for your parish, please contact the Metropolis Youth Director.

Praesidium, Inc. and the Archdiocese National Youth & Young Adult Ministries Office are currently in the process moving the Armatus Training from a dated platform to a new upgraded 2.0 version. Full instructions will be available by the end of the year for parish enrollment and online classes required. Instructional sessions will be presented during the GOYA Athletic Season to Clergy, Advisors, Coaches and Chaperones.

For more information on Armatus, please contact the Metropolis of Pittsburgh Youth & Young Adult Ministries Office. Email: youth@pittsburgh.goarch.org Phone: 412-621-8543
Instructions for Priests and Parish Leadership

Each parish will be responsible for the documentation of the background checks and the documentation of the completed courses. The documents are to be available to Metropolis Staff and the Regional Vicars for review.

1. **Documentation:** Documentation of successful completion of courses and background checks must be maintained. The individual staff members or volunteers will keep original copies. They will bring these originals to the parish (or Metropolis or association) where they will be copied by a parish official; the parish official will note on the copy that they have seen the original. *(See Avery 5160 label template to be placed on each form copy.)*

2. **File Storage:** All files must be kept orderly in a locked location on the parish property. The files must be maintained by the Priest and a designated parish representative.