



Safeguard the Children

During the last year, we have made great strides in providing a safe environment for our children. Our Safeguard the Children Committee is active and meets regularly. The Committee Contacts are listed in the parish bulletin and there are weekly announcements from the Committee in our School Newsletter and Parish Bulletin.

We have made significant modifications to our physical plant to enhance safety. These include the installation of gates to secure our campus during school hours, separate bathrooms for Kindergarten students, clear glass in classroom, office and confessional doors, fencing around trash bins and new ADA Approved Fire Alarms in the school building.

Our clergy, religious, teachers, catechists and staff have attended the *VIRTUS Program* for sexual abuse awareness and prevention. After the initial program, participants are required to continue their training by completing Training Bulletins as they are posted on the VIRTUS website. Moreover, they have undergone *Live Scan Fingerprinting* which is submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice for clearance.

We are now asking that other adults with direct contact with children – including **Ministers of Communion, Lectors, Ushers, Sacristans** and all **Leaders and Volunteers involved in Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts** – attend the *VIRTUS Program* scheduled at our parish on Saturday, April 28 at 9:00 am. In addition, they will receive the *Guidelines for Adults Interacting with Minors at Parish/School Activities or Events*. A signed acknowledgment will be kept on file for every volunteer, including a record of their attendance at *VIRTUS* and (if they are in positions which involve working alone with minors) a record of their *Live Scan Fingerprinting*.

In our School and Religious Education Program, we have established an ongoing Safe Environment Training Program for our students. In May, our School Children will have the *VIRTUS Touching Safety Program*. Almost all Public Schools have some form of Safe Environment Training Program. For those Religious Education students who do not have such a program at their school, we will provide the *VIRTUS Touching Safety Program* when our Religious Education Program begins after the summer break.

All of our efforts have been in accordance with the “*Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*” as revised by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in June, 2005. The Charter is available at <http://www.usccb.org/ocyp/charter.shtml>. A description of Safe Environment Programs is at <http://www.usccb.org/ocyp/websafe.shtml>. Additional resources can be found at <http://www.archdiocese.la/protecting/index.php>.