



Diocese of
Green Bay

Summary of Work by the Diocese of Green Bay to End Sexual Abuse

Here is a general overview of the steps taken by the Catholic Diocese of Green Bay to prevent children and youth from being sexually abused by clergy.

1973

- Diocesan Education Department develops sexual abuse policy

Early 1980s

- Diocese develops and distributes its first sexual abuse policy.
- Workshops and in-services are held for priests to discuss appropriate boundaries and sexual abuse issues.

Early 1990s

- Diocesan sexual abuse policy is revised and distributed.

Mid-1990s

- In presentations to parish leaders, diocesan representatives emphasize the importance of background checks of all paid and volunteer staff, especially those who will work with vulnerable populations such as nursery-age children, elderly members and persons with disabilities.

1997

- The Diocese's Department of Total Catholic Education (TCE) begins conducting regular background checks on parish religious education leaders and Catholic school teachers and administrators. The names of all administrators and teachers with lifetime licenses are submitted to the state for criminal record checks. Those seeking a new license or license renewal are checked automatically by Wisconsin's Department of Public Instruction.

July 2000

- "Maintaining Boundaries," the Diocesan sexual abuse policy, is broadened to include:
 - policies on sexual exploitation and harassment
 - background questionnaires and authorization forms
- TCE's background checks are extended to guests and volunteers

March 2002

- "Maintaining Boundaries" is revised and updated again.

April 2002

- Record Review Task Force is convened. Members are one non-Catholic lay person, one Catholic lay person, one former public educator, a Catholic pastor, and four diocesan representatives.
- Diocesan representatives study all files of the 980 priests who have served in the Diocese since 1859, and find 39 priests have one or more allegations of sexual abuse of a minor against them.

- Lay and diocesan members review all 39.

May 31, 2002

- At a press conference, the task force submits report to Bishop Robert J. Banks and
 - states that only a small percentage of priests had substantiated allegations, and most were from 25 to 40 years ago; nonetheless, one case of sexual abuse is too many.
 - Makes 12 recommendations on how to improve existing practices.
 - At the same press conference, Bishop Robert J. Banks accepts report and calls for further reform of Diocesan sexual abuse policy, particularly in strengthening the rights of victims
- June 13-15, 2002
- U.S. Bishops convene in Dallas and approve the “Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People,” which closely mirrors Green Bay’s policy.

July 2002

- Bishop Robert J. Banks accepts the resignation of two priests in light of the Charter.
- Diocese distributes to all parishes an announcement asking people to report to the Diocese’s chancellor any current or past incidents of child sexual abuse by an ordained minister. The announcements are for parish weekly bulletins.

August 2002

- Bishop Robert J. Banks assembles the new Independent Review Board which is responsible for assessing allegations of sexual abuse of children by priests and other church personnel, and reviewing diocesan sexual abuse policies. The board is composed of five lay people (professionals in the areas of human services, health and law) and one deacon who do not work for the Diocese, and one parish priest.

November 2002

- Diocese again distributes to all parishes an announcement asking people to report to the Diocese’s chancellor or vicar for priests any current or past incidents of child sexual abuse by an ordained minister. The announcements are for parish weekly bulletins.
- Diocese begins rewriting its sexual abuse prevention policy so it is more closely aligned with the national policy, “Promise to Protect, Pledge to Heal.”

January 2003

- Diocese circulates its 2001/2002 annual report to more than 110,000 Catholic homes in Northeastern Wisconsin. In addition to accounting for the Diocese’s sources of income, the report also makes clear that all gifts to the annual fund-raising campaign, called the Bishop’s Appeal, are used solely for the funding of programs and ministries.

February 2003

- U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops sends “safe environment” guidelines to all U.S. Bishops (Charter requires all dioceses to have “safe environment”-type programs).

April 2003

- Diocese of Green Bay selects VIRTUS’ “Protecting God’s Children” as its safe environment program. Eighteen local facilitators are trained by VIRTUS; newly trained facilitators lead two sessions.

May/June 2003

- Another six sessions of “Protecting God’s Children” are conducted, including one at Camp Tekawitha, the diocesan youth camp.
- All Diocesan employees submit to background checks
- Diocese distributes to all parishes an announcement asking people to report to the Diocese’s chancellor or a recommended, independent therapist any current or past incidents of child sexual abuse by an ordained minister. The announcements are for parish weekly bulletins.

July 2003

- In the July 11 issue of The Compass, an announcement about how to report sexual abuse appears on Page 3 and on the newspaper’s web site.
- Bishop Robert J. Banks appoints Chancellor Sister Mary Bride Grubbs as Victim Assistance Coordinator, and Father John Doerfler as Canonical Investigator.

August 2003

- VIRTUS training continues with 18 sessions

September 2003

- VIRTUS training continues with 21 sessions

October 2003

- Auditors from The Gavin Group spend Oct. 20 to 24 in Green Bay reviewing policies and documents, and interviewing Diocesan staff and non-Diocesan people to measure the Diocese’s compliance with the 17 articles of the Charter and Norms. In their findings the auditors conclude that, if by Nov. 14, the Diocese can implement the auditors’ three Instructions and one Recommendation the Diocese of Green Bay will be in compliance.
- VIRTUS training continues with 8 sessions

November 2003

- Creation of Pastoral Code of Conduct and revision of “Maintaining Boundaries” are completed and distributed to parishes, schools and other institutions
- Sexual abuse prevention training program for children is selected
- Diocese meets Nov. 14 deadline and is compliant with national Charter and Norms
- VIRTUS training continues with 2 sessions

December 2003

- The Most Rev. David A. Zubik becomes the 11th Bishop of the Diocese of Green Bay
- Bishop Zubik meets with representatives of a sexual abuse survivors group. Both agree to work together in good faith.
- VIRTUS training continues with 1 session

January 2004

- Bishop David A. Zubik announces that the Diocese is in full compliance with the “Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People,” national framework for preventing sexual abuse of youth and vulnerable adults. The Gavin Group, an independent firm, audited each diocese.

- VIRTUS training continues with 17 sessions. At this point, approximately 6,000 clergy, paid staff and volunteers in the Diocese of Green Bay participated. In all, 81 sessions were held.
- 7,759 background checks are completed for all clergy, staff (diocesan, parish and school), and volunteers.

February 2004

- Bishop David A. Zubik releases specific information on the results of the John Jay Study in relationship to the Diocese of Green Bay. This information was shared with employees, all of the faithful and the press.
- Bishop Zubik extends his apologies to those who were hurt by Father John Feeney's actions; Feeney was found guilty on Feb. 26, 2004, of 4 of 5 charges of sexual contact with minors.
- On Feb. 18, the Diocese launches "Protecting Our Children," a new section of its web site that is a repository of information on how to report abuse, VIRTUS training sessions, diocesan policies and procedures, position statements, and Bishops' comments.
- Diocese distributes to all parishes an announcement asking people to report to the Diocese's Victim Assistance Coordinator or a recommended, independent therapist any current or past incidents of child sexual abuse by an ordained minister. The announcements are for parish weekly bulletins.
- VIRTUS training continues with 4 sessions

March 2004

- VIRTUS training continues with 1 session

April 2004

- Bishop David A. Zubik publicly supports new state laws that strengthen sexual abuse reporting and prosecuting laws
- VIRTUS training continues with 6 sessions

May 2004

- VIRTUS training continues with 3 sessions June 2004
- Bishop David A. Zubik publicly states his support for next national audit.
- VIRTUS training continues with 4 sessions

July 2004

- Diocese implements new online employment application with background check tool. Employees and volunteers who completed the background check through MYB the previous year are asked to complete the new eApps program to ensure the Diocese is in compliance with national charter and norms.
- VIRTUS training continues with 2 sessions

August 2004

- VIRTUS training continues with 14 sessions

September 2004

- Diocese distributes to all parishes an announcement asking people to report to the Diocese's Interim Victim Assistance Coordinator or a recommended, independent therapist any current or past incidents of child sexual abuse by an ordained minister. The announcements are for parish weekly bulletins.
- VIRTUS training continues with 25 sessions

October 2004

- VIRTUS training continues with 28 sessions
- Auditors from The Gavin Group spend Oct. 11 to 15 in Green Bay reviewing policies and documents, and interviewing Diocesan staff and non-Diocesan people to measure the Diocese's compliance with the 17 articles of the Charter and Norms. In their findings the auditors conclude that the Diocese of Green Bay is in full compliance.

November 2004

- VIRTUS training continues with 15 sessions

December 2004

- VIRTUS training continues with 9 sessions

January 2005

- Diocese distributes to all parishes an announcement asking people to report to the Diocese's Interim Victim Assistance Coordinator or a recommended, independent therapist any current or past incidents of child sexual abuse by an ordained minister. The announcements are for parish weekly bulletins.
- VIRTUS training continues with 14 sessions

February 2005

- Bishop David A. Zubik announces that the Catholic Diocese of Green Bay is in full compliance with the U.S. Bishops' national standards for preventing clergy sexual abuse of children. The announcement is based on a report received from The Gavin Group Inc., an independent, non-church organization which conducted the audits in archdioceses and dioceses throughout the country.
- VIRTUS training continues with 8 sessions

March 2005

- VIRTUS training continues with 6 sessions

April 2005

- VIRTUS training continues with 15 sessions
- VIRTUS training conducted in Spanish at two parishes
- Additional online training is offered for Local Safe Environment Coordinators

May 2005

- Diocese distributes its quarterly announcement to all parishes asking people to report to the Diocese's Assistance Coordinator or the recommended, independent therapist any current or past incidents of child sexual abuse by an ordained minister. The announcement also highlights the new, nationwide toll-free number for people to call to make a report. The announcements are for parish weekly bulletins.
- VIRTUS training continues with 12 sessions
- Additional online training is offered for Local Safe Environment Coordinators

June 2005

- VIRTUS training continues with 4 sessions

July 2005

- Ann Fox is named the new Diocesan Assistance Coordinator. Announcement appears in The Compass newspaper and is sent to parishes, schools, religious education coordinators and the secular media.
- Over 11,500 people in the Diocese of Green Bay have completed a VIRTUS[®] Protecting God's Children Awareness Session and over 9,000 people have completed a criminal background check.
- VIRTUS training continues with 1 session
- Diocese circulates the newly revised *Diocesan Code of Pastoral Conduct for Volunteers* to all parishes and schools
- First Safe Environment Newsletter is sent to all parishes.
- John Perring-Mulligan, PhD, is appointed by Bishop Zubik to the diocesan Independent Review Board
- VIRTUS training continues with 1 session

August 2005

- USCCB poster and Safe Environment brochure distributed to all parishes to publicize how to report sexual abuse
- Officer John Flannery is appointed by Bishop Zubik to the diocesan Independent Review Board
- Diocese distributes its quarterly announcement to all parishes asking people to report to the Diocese's Assistance Coordinator or the recommended, independent therapist any current or past incidents of child sexual abuse by an ordained minister. The announcement also highlights the name of the new assistance coordinator. The announcements are for parish weekly bulletins.
- VIRTUS training continues with 12 sessions

September 2005

- VIRTUS training continues with 22 sessions

October 2005

- VIRTUS training continues with 19 sessions

November 2005

- Auditors from The Gavin Group spend Nov. 7 to 10 in Green Bay reviewing policies and documents, and interviewing Diocesan staff and non-Diocesan people to measure the Diocese's compliance with the 17 articles of the Charter and Norms. In their findings the auditors conclude that the Diocese of Green Bay is in full compliance.
- Revision of the policies on appropriate conduct, "Our Promise to Protect ..." is completed and distributed to parishes, schools and other institutions
- Diocese distributes its quarterly announcement to all parishes asking people to report to the Diocese's Assistance Coordinator or the recommended, independent therapist any current or past incidents of child sexual abuse by an ordained minister. The announcements are for parish weekly bulletins.
- VIRTUS training continues with 8 sessions

December 2005

- Safe Environment Newsletter sent to all parishes
- VIRTUS training continues with 6 sessions

January 2006

- Meeting at the Diocese of Green Bay for all VIRTUS facilitators
- VIRTUS training continues with 10 sessions
- Diocese distributes its quarterly announcement to all parishes asking people to report any current or past incidents of child sexual abuse by an ordained minister to either the Diocese's Assistance Coordinator, the recommended, independent therapist or local law enforcement authorities. The announcements are for parish bulletins.

February 2006

- VIRTUS training continues with 12 sessions

March 2006

- Bishop David A. Zubik announces that the Catholic Diocese of Green Bay is in full compliance with the U.S. Bishops' national standards for preventing clergy sexual abuse of children. The announcement is based on a report received from The Gavin Group Inc., an independent, non-church organization which conducted the audits in archdioceses and dioceses throughout the country.
- Safe Environment Newsletter sent to all parishes
- VIRTUS training continues with 11 sessions
- 13,472 people in the Diocese of Green Bay have completed a VIRTUS[®] Protecting God's Children Awareness Session and 15,204 people in the Diocese of Green Bay have completed a criminal background check.

April 2006

- VIRTUS training continues with 3 sessions
- Mandated Reporters of Abuse Reference Guide distributed to all parishes with in the Diocese of Green Bay

- Diocese distributes its quarterly announcement to all parishes asking people to report to the Diocese's Assistance Coordinator or the recommended, independent therapist any current or past incidents of child sexual abuse by an ordained minister. The announcements are for parish weekly bulletins.

May 2006

- VIRTUS training continues with 7 sessions

June 2006

- VIRTUS training continues with 8 sessions

July 2006

- Safe Environment Newsletter sent to all parishes
- Diocese distributes its quarterly announcement to all parishes asking people to report to the Diocese's Assistance Coordinator or the recommended, independent therapist any current or past incidents of child sexual abuse by an ordained minister. The announcements are for parish weekly bulletins.
- VIRTUS training continues with 7 sessions

August 2006

- VIRTUS training continues with 8 sessions
- 15 new VIRTUS Facilitators trained and commissioned for the parishes and Diocese of Green Bay

September 2006

- VIRTUS training continues with 27 sessions

October 2006

- Bishop Zubik leads a Prayer Service of Apology. Recognizing that the Church in its humanness may have caused hurt or pain, all people who felt hurt by the Church in any way were invited to come to the prayer service at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral in Green Bay. About 200 people attended.
- Safe Environment Newsletter sent to all parishes
- VIRTUS training continues with 22 sessions
- Diocese distributes its quarterly announcement to all parishes asking people to report to the Diocese's Assistance Coordinator or the recommended, independent therapist any current or past incidents of child sexual abuse by an ordained minister. The announcements are for parish weekly bulletins.

November 2006

- Auditors from The Gavin Group spend Nov. 6 to 10 in Green Bay reviewing policies and documents, and interviewing Diocesan staff and non-Diocesan people to measure the Diocese's compliance with the 17 articles of the Charter and Norms. In their findings the auditors conclude that the Diocese of Green Bay is in full compliance.
- *Parent Guide to Internet Safety* distributed to all parishes and schools
- VIRTUS training continues with 14 sessions

December 2006

- Bishop Zubik meets with Major Religious Superiors of Men highlighting the importance of collaboration between diocesan bishops and the provincials of the participating religious orders present in their diocese regarding policies relating to the protection of children and young people.
- VIRTUS training continues with 4 sessions

January 2007

- Bishop David A. Zubik announces that the Catholic Diocese of Green Bay is in full compliance with the U.S. Bishops' national standards for preventing clergy sexual abuse of children. The announcement is based on a report received from The Gavin Group Inc., an independent, non-church organization which conducted the audits in archdioceses and dioceses throughout the country.
- Diocese distributes its quarterly announcement to all parishes asking people to report to the Diocese's Assistance Coordinator or the recommended, independent therapist any current or past incidents of child sexual abuse by an ordained minister. The announcements are for parish weekly bulletins.
- Safe Environment Newsletter sent to all parishes
- VIRTUS training continues with 17 sessions

February 2007

- Continued training for Local Safe Environment Coordinators and VIRTUS Facilitators offered in Green Bay.
- Local Safe Environment Coordinator Technical Manual created and distributed.
- VIRTUS training continues with 6 sessions

March 2007

- VIRTUS training continues with 11 sessions
- Continued training for Local Safe Environment Coordinators and VIRTUS Facilitators offered in Clintonville.
- Continued training for Local Safe Environment Coordinators and VIRTUS Facilitators offered in Oshkosh.
- Continued training for Local Safe Environment Coordinators and VIRTUS Facilitators offered in Two Rivers.

April 2007

- VIRTUS training continues with 6 sessions
- Safe Environment Newsletter sent to all parishes
- Diocese distributes its quarterly announcement to all parishes asking people to report to the Diocese's Assistance Coordinator or the recommended, independent therapist any current or past incidents of child sexual abuse by an ordained minister. The announcements are for parish weekly bulletins.

May 2007

- VIRTUS training continues with 8 sessions

June 2007

- VIRTUS training continues with 6 sessions
- Additional Internet Safety materials and Creating Safer Communities Bulletin circulated to VIRTUS Facilitators to distribute at VIRTUS Protecting Our Children Adult Awareness Sessions.

July 2007

- New VIRTUS Attendance policy effective July 1, 2007
- Safe Environment Newsletter sent to all parishes
- VIRTUS training continues with 2 sessions

August 2007

- VIRTUS training continues with 11 sessions
- 17 new VIRTUS Facilitators trained and commissioned for the parishes and Diocese of Green Bay
- Diocese distributes its quarterly announcement to all parishes asking people to report to the Diocese's Assistance Coordinator or the recommended, independent therapist any current or past incidents of child sexual abuse by an ordained minister. The announcements are for parish weekly bulletins.

September 2007

- VIRTUS training continues with 21 sessions

October 2007

- VIRTUS training continues with 25 sessions
- Safe Environment Newsletter sent to all parishes

November 2007

- Auditor from The Gavin Group spend Nov. 5 to 9 in Green Bay reviewing policies and documents, and interviewing Diocesan staff and non-Diocesan people to measure the Diocese's compliance with the 17 articles of the Charter and Norms. In his findings the auditor concludes that the Diocese of Green Bay is in full compliance.
- VIRTUS training continues with 14 sessions

December 2007

- VIRTUS training continues with 4 sessions

January 2008

- VIRTUS training continues with 12 sessions
- Safe Environment Newsletter sent to all parishes
- Diocese distributes its quarterly announcement to all parishes asking people to report to the Diocese's Assistance Coordinator or the recommended, independent therapist any current or past incidents of child sexual abuse by an ordained minister. The announcements are for parish weekly bulletins.
- Editorial published in the *Compass* newspaper "Remembering Survivors of Clergy Sexual Abuse" (1/11/08) and article regarding charter compliance (1/4/08).

February 2008

- USCCB announces that the Catholic Diocese of Green Bay is in full compliance with the U.S. Bishops' national standards for preventing clergy sexual abuse of children. The announcement is based on a report received from The Gavin Group Inc., an independent, non-church organization which conducted the audits in archdioceses and dioceses throughout the country.
- VIRTUS training continues with 11 sessions

March 2008

- USCCB Child Abuse Prevention Month Liturgy Guide and diocesan prevention flyer distributed to all parishes.
- VIRTUS training continues with 6 sessions
- Diocese distributes its quarterly announcement to all parishes asking people to report to the Diocese's Assistance Coordinator or the recommended, independent therapist any current or past incidents of child sexual abuse by an ordained minister. The announcements are for parish weekly bulletins.

April 2008

- Training for Local Safe Environment Coordinators regarding process to recheck backgrounds on all employees and volunteers offered in Green Bay.
- Training for Local Safe Environment Coordinators regarding process to recheck backgrounds on all employees and volunteers offered in Two Rivers.
- Training for Local Safe Environment Coordinators regarding process to recheck backgrounds on all employees and volunteers offered in Oshkosh
- Training for Local Safe Environment Coordinators regarding process to recheck backgrounds on all employees and volunteers offered in Shawano.
- Editorial published in the *Compass* newspaper "Darkness to Light: Child Abuse Prevention Month" (4/4/08)
- VIRTUS training continues with 5 sessions

May 2008

- Safe Environment Newsletter sent to all parishes
- VIRTUS training continues with 12 sessions

June 2008

- VIRTUS training continues with 8 sessions
- Diocese distributes its quarterly announcement to all parishes asking people to report to the Diocese's Assistance Coordinator or the recommended, independent therapist any current or past incidents of child sexual abuse by an ordained minister. The announcements are for parish weekly bulletins.

July 2008

- VIRTUS training session conducted at Holy Name Retreat House on Chambers Island in Door County.
- VIRTUS training session conducted in Spanish at St Therese Parish in Appleton.

August 2008

- VIRTUS training continues with 14 sessions
- 17 new VIRTUS Facilitators trained and commissioned for the parishes and Diocese of Green Bay

September 2008

- VIRTUS training continues with 29 sessions
- Diocese distributes its quarterly announcement to all parishes asking people to report to the Diocese's Assistance Coordinator or the recommended, independent therapist any current or past incidents of child sexual abuse by an ordained minister. The announcements are for parish weekly bulletins.

October 2008

- VIRTUS training continues with 21 sessions
- Auditors from The Gavin Group spend Oct. 27 to 30 in Green Bay reviewing policies and documents, and interviewing Diocesan staff and non-Diocesan people to measure the Diocese's compliance with the 17 articles of the Charter and Norms. In their findings the auditors conclude that the Diocese of Green Bay is in full compliance.

November 2008

- VIRTUS training continues with 9 sessions
- VIRTUS training session conducted in Spanish at St Therese Parish in Appleton.

Last updated: November 13, 2008