



And here we are, the last newsletter of this year. I think most of us wonder, “Where did the year go?” When we are in the middle of a hot and muggy August day, we are not thinking about December 1, being right around the corner. But here we are and in the blink of an eye, we are in the thick of Christmas shopping, family gatherings and school Christmas plays.

Our two sons, Jon (J.D.) 22 and Samuel 18, have birthdays in December, exactly seven days apart. J.D. was supposed to be a Valentine’s baby but God had a different plan and he arrived eight weeks early.

I have always overly obsessed with keeping Christmas out of their **actual** birthdays. I would protest if ANYONE plugged in the Christmas tree on December 8 or 15. I am even so bold as to make it known that birthday gifts that arrived in either red or green wrap will be given the stink eye from me. I have been determined that JD and Samuel’s birthdays will FEEL like a birthday and NOT like a day squeezed into Christmas time.

If I know someone has a December birthday, I interview them and see if it ruined their childhood. I do this mainly, to relieve my guilt. Every year as we round Thanksgiving weekend, I begin to prepare for the battle in my head of birthday versus Christmas.

Fast forward to this past weekend.

It was so good to have Samuel home from college. I made sure to have plenty of good coffee on hand because he is my only coffee drinker at home. On Thursday morning I noticed he was sitting on the couch with a cup of coffee in hand. I did a double take, he was holding a Christmas mug full of piping hot coffee. I wish you all could have seen the slightly perplexed look on my face but I went about my business setting the table for Thanksgiving morning breakfast. Friday late morning, when he finally decided to get out of bed, I breezed through the living room and there he sat, looking at his phone, with another Christmas mug full of piping hot coffee. I think I raised one eyebrow. Saturday morning . . . You guessed it. Piping hot . . . Christmas mug. So on Sunday morning, I got up made my cup of coffee and pulled one of the Christmas mugs out of the dishwasher and put it beside the coffee pot.

As we shared a few minutes together while having a second cup of coffee, I confessed my obsession of keeping Christmas out of his birthday. He laughed and said, “Mom, I love Christmas and wish it could be all year long.” He showed me the Christmas play list on his phone and apparently he listens to it through out the year!

As for JD, he told me he didn’t care, because it means double the gifts!

Why is it, that all those years I worked so hard to control what was not mine to control. I’m pretty sure God just patiently waited for me to realize, HIS timing and season was perfectly planned for me, before I even knew there was a plan. I wasted so much time trying to plan it and control it instead of just enjoying HIS plan. I think this season of birthdays I need to remember to thank God for his perfect plan in my imperfect life.

By the way, guess who enjoyed putting the Christmas tree up Thanksgiving weekend listening to the Christmas playlist on his phone?

Local Administrators - Retrain in 2018

As a Diocese, we are committed every five years to **retrain** all employees and volunteers at parishes and schools. The program is one we have used in the past as a refresher course called Keeping the Promise Alive. In January’s newsletter I will have more information about the on-line refresher course and how we will retrain.



What does it mean when someone’s VIRTUS account says “pending?” I hear this often. What this means is the individual taking the online training started the training but has not completed the training. Some of these accounts can be many years old. Or perhaps they registered for a live session but never attended. As time permits, I have been trying to clean up the old accounts so they are not junking up your VIRTUS list. If you will take time to go through your list and let me know who shows a pending account, we can get those old records cleaned up; making your list more manageable.



If you run ICHATS and you receive a message that says something to the effect that you can not run any more backgrounds because you have reached your record limit, all you need to do is email: MSP-CRD-ICHATHELP@mich.gov and request more records. You may need to provide your parish or school name, agency code, how many more ICHATS you think you will run and why you need to run ICHATS.



Make sure you are being charge \$0.00 for your ICHAT accounts. If you are being charged anything, please contact MSP, using the email above to let them know we are non-profit. There should be no charges to you.

Parishes and Schools

If you hired a new employees and the timing was such that the individual could only take an online VIRTUS session and you had every intention of making sure they took a LIVE session but it has not worked out, please send me the number of individuals who still need the live session.

We will work on getting them trained soon. The live session for ALL employees is part of the commitment we make as a Diocese. We can get creative with a convenient time and place to make it work for all.

Child and Youth Protection Survey

During the spring the CYP office sent a 12 question survey to better understand areas that you may need help in. In several newsletters following the survey, I tried to choose one of the survey questions and give some deeper explanation to it. I would like to give an overall view and finish explaining the remaining questions on page 2.

The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People

Affirms our deep commitment to creating a safe environment within our parishes and schools for children and youth. During 2017, a brief summary each month of what the seventeen Articles in the Charter means for us as a community, will be highlighted in our newsletter.

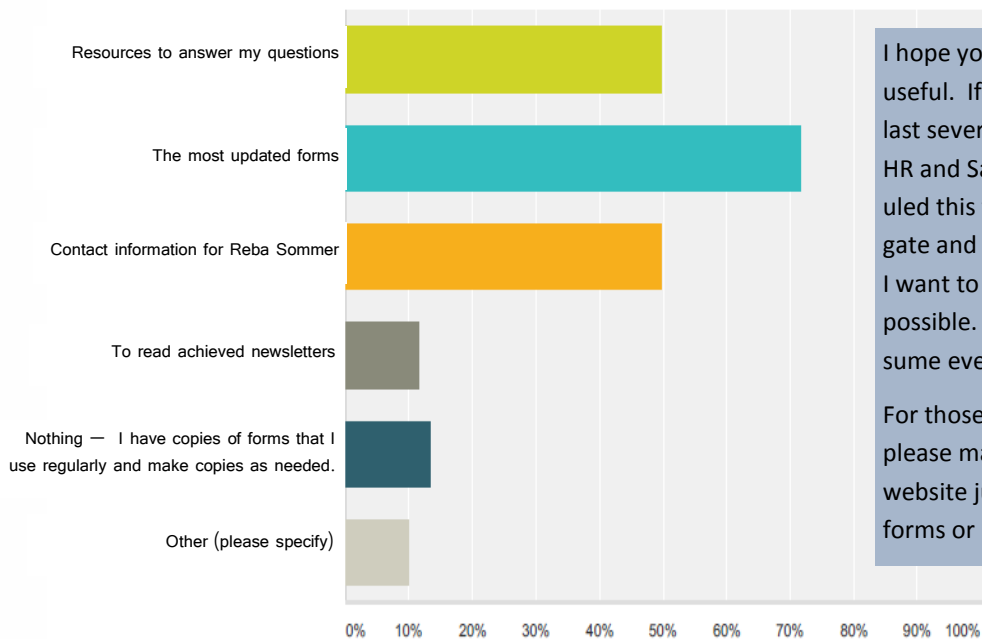
To Ensure - Article 8

A committee was formed at first as an Ad Hoc Committee but then later became a standing committee on Sexual Abuse. It’s membership is made up of representatives from all regions of the country. The committee advises the USCCB on comprehensive planning and recommendation related to protecting children and youth. The committee also oversees the plans, programs and budget. For a copy of the Charter go to <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/child-and-youth-protection/upload/2011-Charter-booklet.pdf>

Office Child and Youth Protection Survey

Q1 I use the Diocese of Lansing Office of Child and Youth Protection website for the following:

Answered: 60 Skipped: 0



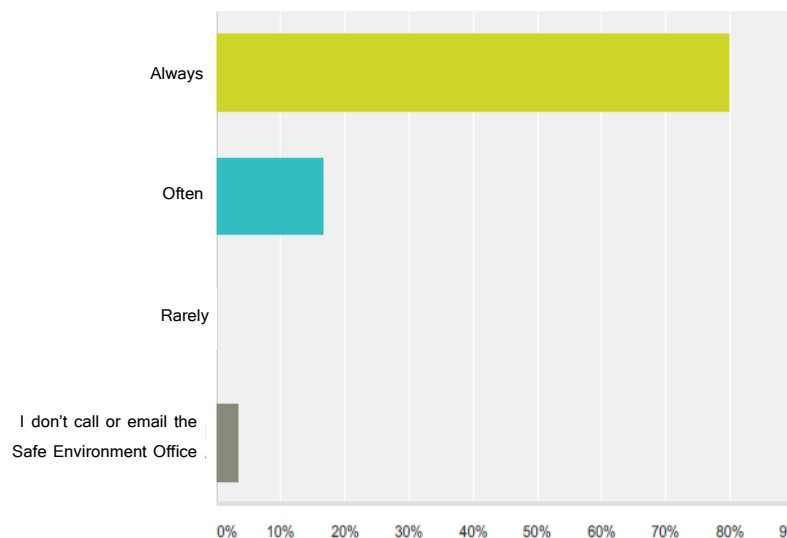
I hope you find the CYP web page useful. If you have looked at it in the last several months it has a new look! HR and Safe Environment are scheduled this week to learn how to navigate and make edits to our own page. I want to make it as user friendly as possible. I learn by visuals so I assume everyone else does too.

For those of you who make copies, please make a routine visit to the website just in case we have updated forms or helpful information for you.

Office Child and Youth Protection Survey

Q2 I get timely and accurate information when I call or email the Safe Environment Office.

Answered: 60 Skipped: 0



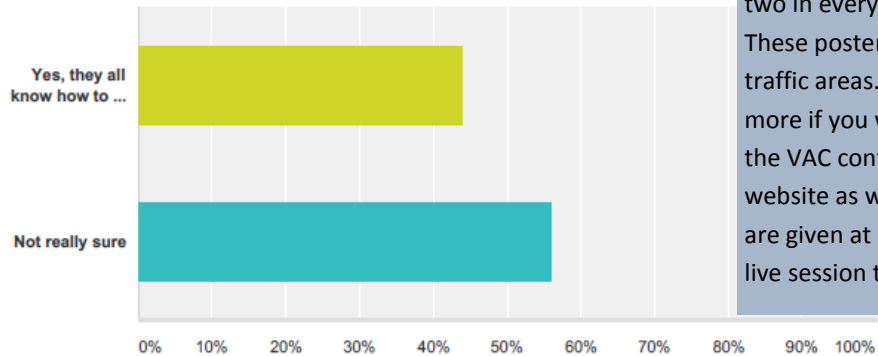
First of all. If this office scored 100%, that would be great but I would not be satisfied that I am doing all I can. When it comes to the safety of our children and youth there will ALWAYS be ways and areas to improve on.

My hope is to always respond to emails or calls the same day. I will continue to work toward that. Because it's important for me to get to know all of those I serve, I spend a great deal of time on the road traveling to parishes and schools. If you do not hear back same day, please know that is what I'm doing. I try not to schedule every single day on the road so I can make sure I am responding to you. My goal is to see that 80% increase! As for those of you who fall in the 3%, I'm missing you.

Office Child and Youth Protection Survey

Q3 I am confident that the employees and volunteers know when and how to contact our diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator if they are faced with an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor by a church employee/volunteer.

Answered: 59 Skipped: 1

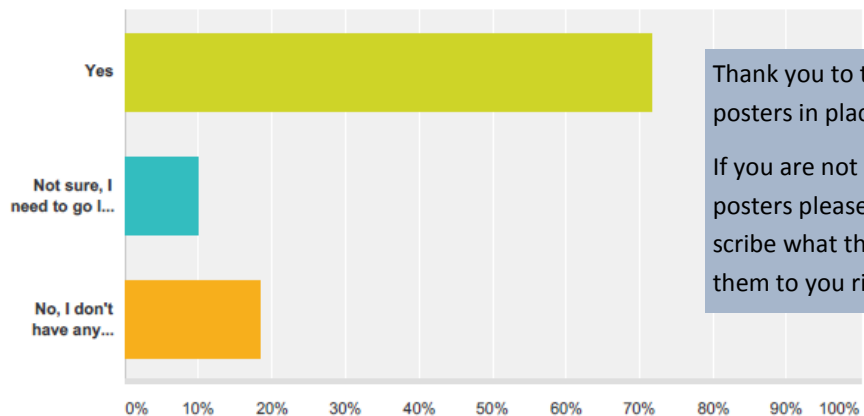


The Victim's Assistance Coordinator (VAC) name and contact information are on the Protecting God's Children Promise to Protect Pledge to Heal Posters. There should be at minimum two in every school and every parish. These posters are to be placed in high traffic areas. I am happy to send more if you would like. In addition, the VAC contact information is on the website as well as in pamphlets that are given at Protecting God's Children live session trainings.

Office Child and Youth Protection Survey

Q4 I have the Protecting God's Children poster with the Victim Assistance Coordinator's contact information on it and the Code of Conduct poster posted in high traffic areas of my facility.

Answered: 60 Skipped: 0



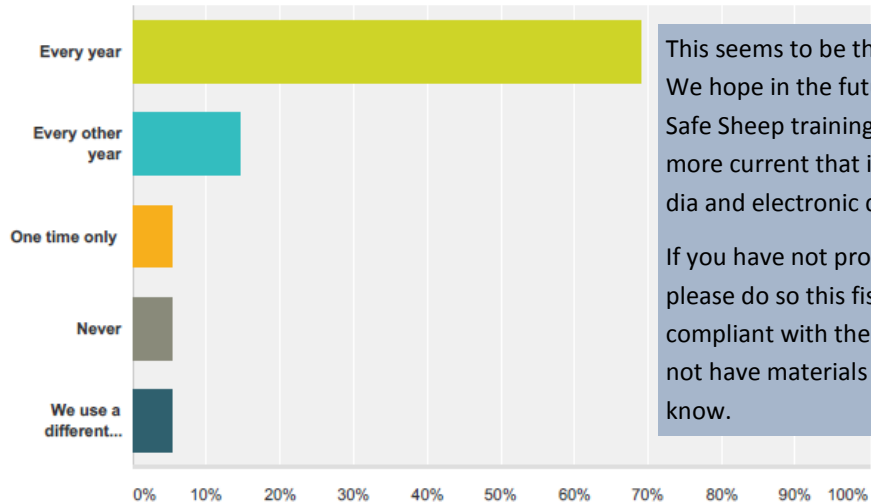
Thank you to those who have these posters in place(Q 3).

If you are not sure or do not have any posters please call me and I will describe what they look like and get them to you right away.

Office Child and Youth Protection Survey

Q5 For grades K - 5th, how often do you provide the Safe Sheep Training?

Answered: 55 Skipped: 5



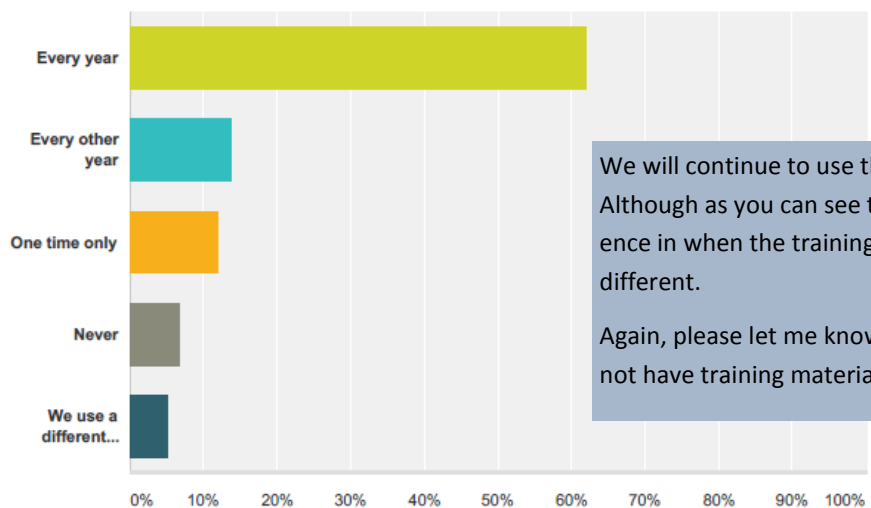
This seems to be the age old question. We hope in the future to replace the Safe Sheep training with something more current that includes social media and electronic devices.

If you have not provided training, please do so this fiscal year so we are compliant with the Charter. If you do not have materials please let me know.

Office Child and Youth Protection Survey

Q6 For grades 6th - 12th, how often do you provide the Praesidium Training?

Answered: 58 Skipped: 2



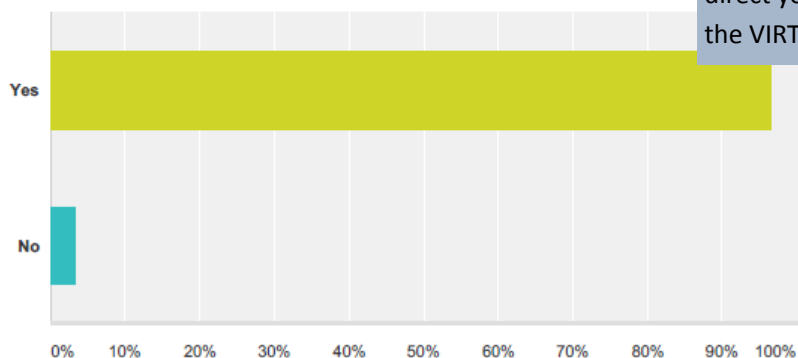
We will continue to use this training. Although as you can see the consistence in when the training is offered is different.

Again, please let me know if you do not have training materials.

Office Child and Youth Protection Survey

Q7 Do you maintain a current list of active volunteers each school year?

Answered: 59 Skipped: 1

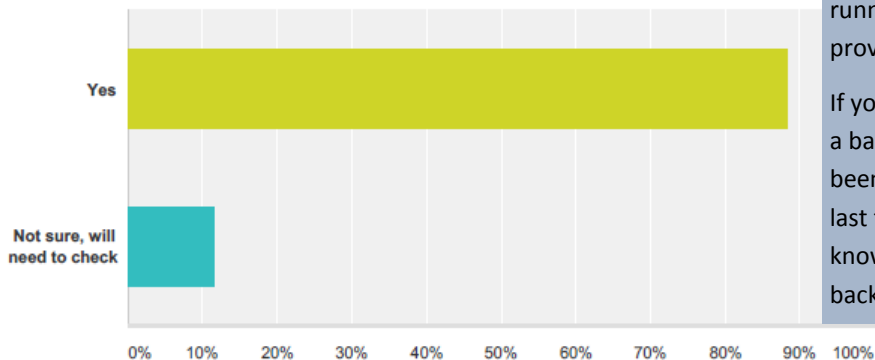


Thank you for making this a priority. We cannot stress enough how important it is for you to know who is coming in and out of your buildings. If you are not certain how to go about getting started on maintaining a list let me know and I can direct you to the Master Report on the VIRTUS website.

Office Child and Youth Protection Survey

Q8 I am confident that the adults who have unsupervised contact with the minors in my parish religious education program or school have a current criminal background check on file and have completed the Protecting God's Children training.

Answered: 60 Skipped: 0



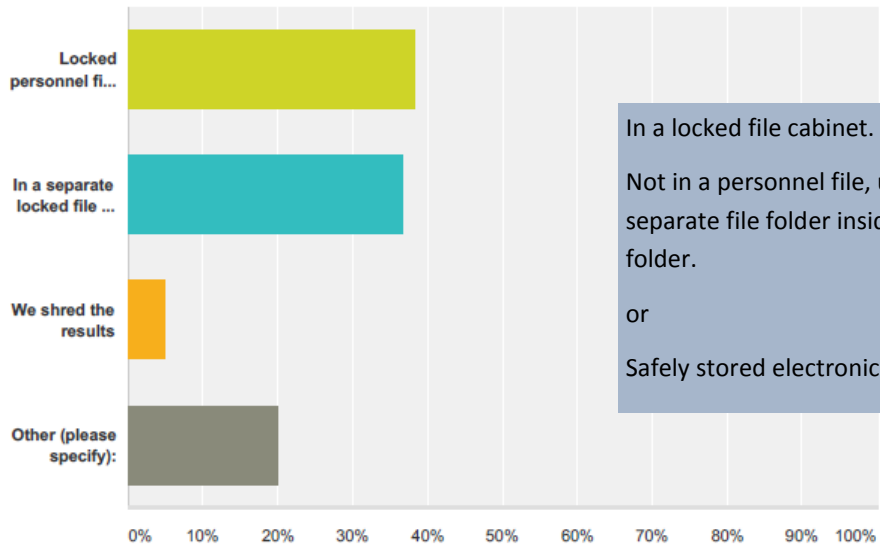
Thank you for being diligent in running backgrounds and providing training.

If you are not sure who needs a back ground or if they have been completed within the last five years, please let me know and we will get you back on track.

Office Child and Youth Protection Survey

Q9 Where do you keep the results of the criminal background check?

Answered: 60 Skipped: 0



In a locked file cabinet.

Not in a personnel file, unless it is in a separate file folder inside the personnel folder.

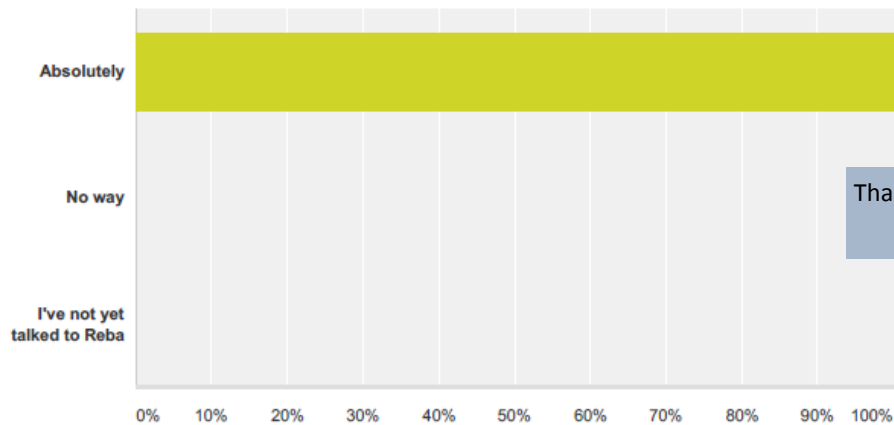
or

Safely stored electronically.

Office Child and Youth Protection Survey

Q10 Do you feel comfortable communicating with Reba Sommer from the Safe Environment Office when you have questions?

Answered: 60 Skipped: 0



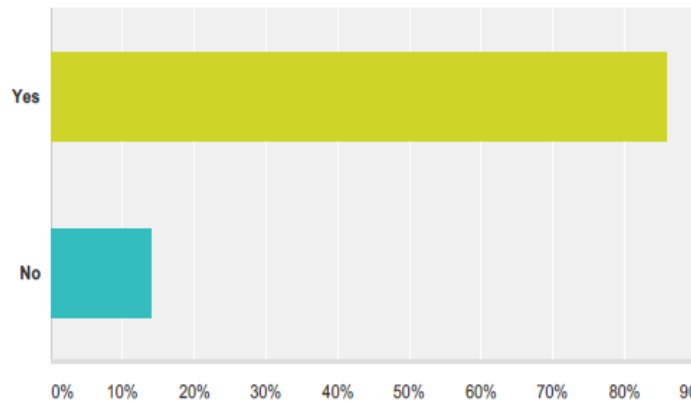
Thank you!



Office Child and Youth Protection Survey

Q11 Do you use DOL Data to report your Child and Youth Protection information for the annual audit?

Answered: 57 Skipped: 3



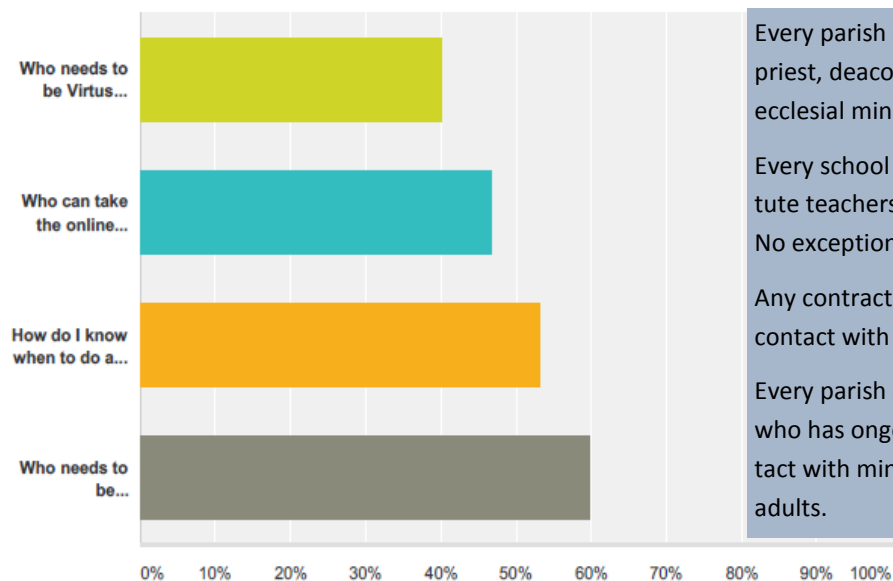
Seeing an 85% to this question was a nice relief. Many ministries at Central Offices use the DOLDATA website. We depend on you to gather and supply the information it asks so we can forward the data from our Diocese to the USCCB.

It is very important to provide a way for you to report the data in the CYP part of DOLDATA. Those figures that you supply are reported to USCCB and then compiled nationwide. If a parish or school does not report on a local level we have to provide a reason why. It is my hope that using the DOLDATA website is efficient for you.

Office Child and Youth Protection Survey

Q12 I need more information about:

Answered: 15 Skipped: 45



Every parish employee, every priest, deacon, seminarian and lay ecclesial minister. No exceptions.

Every school employee, all substitute teachers and student teachers. No exceptions.

Any contract employee who has contact with minors.

Every parish or school volunteer who has ongoing unsupervised contact with minors or vulnerable adults.