

Mother of God School: Child Protection Policy

Mother of God School treasures our students and is invested in their well-being. MOG School adopted the Child Protection Policy of the Archdiocese of Washington (ADW) from its onset. A new MOG School Child protection policy was promulgated effective September 2015. This policy mirrors the ADW policy following the same procedures and even using the same vendors. This policy is available to view or download on the school website under "Child Protection Policy and Volunteering." This policy relates to anyone who has contact with children in the school; employees, volunteers, contractors and vendors. This policy was updated to include all MOG Community ministries January 2019.

Purpose:

To provide MOG School an effective and comprehensive Child Protection Policy and protocol both to protect our children and to protect teachers, volunteers and the school from liability. As a ministry of the Mother of God Community, MOGS is subject to the community's requirements for Child Protection training and comprehensive background checks for its staff and volunteers. The Community policy mirrors the ADW Policy using the same contract services (Virtus & SSCI) so that those who have already met certain requirements elsewhere will not be required to repeat the process. Contracting separately with the same entities (Virtus and SSCI) enables the Community and its ministries to meet similar requirements but in a way that better meets our needs.

MOG School Requirements & Protocols

The critical distinction is made for persons who have "substantial contact" with children, as defined in the ADW Policy. Those who have "substantial contact" must meet application, criminal background check and educational requirements. Those who do not, but volunteer in the school or are in contact with children, but are not alone with them, must meet a lower but appropriate protocol.

MOG School personnel who work or volunteer in either our Pre-K or our Extended Care Programs are subject to additional State requirements: COMAR Regulations. This separate protocol includes Federal and State background checks through fingerprinting. Additional forms and authorizations also apply.

Covered persons

All employees and *volunteers* whose service and activity puts them in *substantial contact* with children (see Substantial contact).

Substantial contact

Contact with children in which the duration and scope in both time and exposure to children is neither trivial nor limited and may occur on a routine and/or ongoing basis. *Substantial contact* does not include persons who have an isolated or infrequent interaction with a *child* or children that is also supervised/monitored by an authorized person. Any *covered persons* performing service or work in a school are considered to have *substantial contact* (see *Covered persons*).

Applications and Background Checks: Employees, Volunteers and Contractors

Principle

Criminal background checks are a critical element in ensuring the safety of children and protecting them from inappropriate actions or behaviors of others. Therefore, all employees, and *volunteers* who will come into *substantial contact* with children will undergo the relevant state and federal *criminal background checks*.

Clearance Requirements:

Employees and Volunteers

- a. Submitted the appropriate Application for Employment or Volunteer Application Form
- b. Cleared the required *criminal background checks*.

Covered persons, including *volunteers*, periodically may be required to submit an updated application or to have an updated *criminal background check* undertaken. These updated records will be maintained by the Community Office.

Child Protection Compliance Coordinator (CPC)

The child protection compliance coordinator:

- a. Assists the school in ensuring *compliance* with the *Child Protection Policy* by employees and *volunteers*
- b. Maintains *compliance* records for the school so only those who are fully compliant may work or *volunteer* with children
- c. Disseminates login and user information about online education sessions.

Clearance Requirements: Local Educational Agencies

Any *local educational agency* that assigns *non-MOGS educational service providers* to work directly with minors in MOG School must:

- a. Conduct a *criminal background check* for each *non-MOGS educational service provider*
- b. Require each *non-MOGS educational service provider* to complete the *local educational agency's* child protection and safety training, and
- c. Provide documentation to the CPC that each *non-MOGS educational service provider* assigned to MOG School has successfully passed the *criminal background check* and completed the training.

Clearance Requirements: Third Party Vendor/Contractor

Any *third party vendor/contractor* must complete thorough screenings and *criminal background checks* of its employees, agents, *volunteers* and subcontractors who potentially will have contact with minors while working on community property. Anyone not providing this documentation to the CPC must be supervised by qualified school personnel.

Education

Principle

MOG Community and MOG School is committed to preventing *child abuse* before it occurs and to identifying and reporting *child abuse* once it has occurred. By raising the awareness and understanding of abuse issues among school staff members, *volunteers* and other *adults* who work with or have *substantial contact* with children and young people under the care of the School and by increasing their knowledge and ability to deal effectively with *child abuse* issues once they arise, risks to *child* safety can be greatly reduced. By educating children on how to be safe and stay safe, the School will enhance the ability of children to protect themselves and encourage an environment that allows children to communicate any potential endangerment.

Educational Programs to be Offered

MOGS shall provide educational programs that:

- a. Are intended to teach participants to prevent, recognize and appropriately report *child abuse*
- b. May include seminars, workshops and meetings, online or written materials and lesson plans
- c. Are available locally.

Who Must Participate

Participation in these educational programs is required of all *covered persons* and:

- a. Required of all children and youth who participate in community, school, afterschool programs, religious education and youth ministry programs
- b. Recommended for parents and other *adults* even if they do not work or *volunteer* with children participating in activities, services and programs.

Educational Deadlines for Adults

New employees and *volunteers* who will have *substantial contact* with children:

- a. Shall enroll in appropriate preventive education programs at the earliest possible date and no later than sixty (60) days following the assumption of their duties; new staff or *volunteers* for summer school programs must complete training prior to start of the summer program.
- b. Must complete a minimum of two hours of education in the first year of service
- c. Will be considered non-compliant if this education requirement is not met within the specified time frame and shall be removed from contact with children at the direction of the School Principal or Community Coordinator.
- d. School employees shall complete one hour of education in each subsequent year. *Volunteers* shall be provided education in each subsequent year, at a minimum through written or online materials.

Records of *compliance* with education policies will be monitored by CPCC.

Educational Curriculum for Adults

All *covered persons* shall attend scheduled training sessions that include but are not limited to the following subjects, also known as the *Core Curriculum for Adults*:

- a. Appropriate boundaries and established prohibitions in ministry
- b. Nature of the *child abuse* problem
- c. Signs and symptoms of abuse in children and youth
- d. Laws, policies and procedures for reporting abuse allegations
- e. Policies and procedures to prevent *child abuse* by clergy, Community personnel or others who come into contact with children

- f. Policies and procedures to prevent *child abuse* on any Community-owned property or at Community-sponsored events and activities
- g. Types of disclosure and how to respond appropriately
- h. Policies and procedures to respond to allegations of abuse.

Parents and other *adults*, other than *covered persons*, are strongly encouraged and invited to attend scheduled training sessions.

Educational Curriculum for Minors in School and Religious Education Programs

Children and young people shall attend scheduled training sessions that include but are not limited to the following subjects:

- a. Basic safety skills
- b. Recognition of dangerous and abusive situations
- c. Appropriate and inappropriate physical contact and other interpersonal boundary violations
- d. Ability to say “no” to unwanted situations
- e. Ability to identify trusting *adults* with whom to speak
- f. Importance of disclosure if inappropriate or unwanted actions are directed to self or others
- g. Recognition that abusive situations are never the fault of the *child*
- h. Ability to safely interact with technology, including the Internet and mobile devices.

This material shall be provided annually through age and developmentally appropriate programs for children in all grades at the School, and for children participating in community religious education and youth ministry programs.

Reporting Requirements

Reporting requirements follow the Archdiocesan (ADW) Child Protection Policy which constitutes the basis of this, Mother of God School, Child Protection Policy. Civil authorities, school authorities and Archdiocesan authorities must be properly notified, in accord with ADW Policy.

Policy Summary and Procedures

- Policy covers everyone involved with MOG Community sponsored ministries: employees, volunteers, students, parents, visitors, contractors etc.
- Persons with “Substantial contact” (employees, volunteers, contractors ...) with children must have documented and on file with the community office (CPCC)
 - Criminal Background checks
 - Virtus Child Protection training (subsequent refresher training may be required)
 - Signed Employment or Volunteer Application form
- Children- must be educated in safety and reporting. This will be repeated over the years but modified as they grow older (age appropriate). The School Principal is responsible to ensure that this is occurring with school students.
- Adults (parents, volunteers etc.)- all adults are encouraged, but not required to complete initial Virtus training and any ongoing supplemental training.
- CPCC responsibilities:
 - Access to Virtus online database
 - Access to criminal background check results online
 - Maintenance of employee personnel files containing evidence of Employment Application, Virtus, and background check acknowledgement
 - Maintenance of volunteers and contractors with substantial contact or volunteers electing to:
 - Maintain list of all approved volunteers; ensure list is referenced.
 - Maintain files containing evidence of MOG Community Volunteer Application, Virtus, background check application
 - Communicate to school community the opportunities to take part in Virtus training initial or ongoing.
- School Administration
 - Ensure that this policy or related procedures are communicated and enforced throughout the community: personnel, contractors, volunteers, via handbooks, notices
 - Audit the effectiveness of the implementation of this policy to ensure accountability.
 - Ensure that child safety training is incorporated into school curriculum