

# Parish Youth Safety Administrator

Information and Work Checklists



Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America  
Youth & Young Adult Ministries

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# Memo to Parish Youth Safety Administrators

May 24, 2019  
Saint Symeon the Stylite

Dear Parish Youth Safety Administrator,

Christ is Risen!

It's a blessing to welcome you to our Youth Safety Team.

As we know you appreciate, ministry is about introducing young people to Christ and helping them live out their relationship with the Lord in His Church. And, in order to do that, we need to create ministry environments that are physically and spiritually safe and healthy.

The new **Policies for the Safety of Children and Youth** do exactly that.

And you're going to play a critical role in this important work. As Parish Youth Safety Administrator, your job will be to ensure that your Parish is fully compliant with these Policies.

We have developed a comprehensive, step-by-step plan to begin implementing the Policies this year.

One of your most important tasks is to assemble the roster of Youth Workers in your Parish and help us ensure that they are the only ones participating in Youth Ministry Programs and Events. Youth Workers, as you know, are people who have been registered, trained, and screened under these Policies.

In short, you're going to help us make sure that the people who are leading our youth ministries are prepared and vetted: that we have the right people in place to undertake this critical work.

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In the pages that follow, you'll find a checklist with everything you need to do in order to ensure that your Parish is compliant.

We're both incredibly grateful that you've joined us in this groundbreaking work in the life of our Church.

Together, we can keep our kids safe. Glory to God!

In Christ,

Steven Christoforou  
Director, Y2AM

Father Earl Cantos  
Director & Youth Safety Compliance Officer

# Key Highlights from the Policies

## **What are the Policies for the Safety of Children and Youth?**

Approved by both our Holy Eparchial Synod of Bishops and our Archdiocesan Clergy Laity Congress in 2018, the Policies are the new framework for keeping our kids safe at Youth Ministry Programs and Events across the entire Archdiocese.

The Policies mandate two basic things:

1. Only Youth Workers can participate in Youth Ministry Programs and Events;
2. Youth Workers must report all Abuse and Suspected Abuse, as well as other violations of the Policies; and

In addition, the Policies offer best practices that can be tailored for the needs of particular Youth Ministry Programs and Events.

## **Who is a Youth Worker?**

A Youth Worker is the only person who is eligible to participate in Youth Ministry Programs or Events. In order to become a Youth Worker, a person must:

1. Register with his or her Parish Administrator (and re-register annually after that);
2. Complete the required online video training once per year; and
3. Successfully pass a background screen every two years.

# Highlights (continued)

## **What is a Youth Ministry Program or Event?**

A Youth Ministry Program or Event is any program or event in the Archdiocese that is designed to primarily serve Children or Youth.

This includes everything from youth groups (like HOPE, JOY, and GOYA) to educational programs (like Sunday School) to athletic programs (like Parish basketball and volleyball teams) to cultural programs (like Parish Greek school or Greek dance programs), in addition to youth retreats and camping programs.

## **What is mandated reporting?**

Mandated reporting is something required by law in jurisdictions across the United States. Youth Workers must report to state authorities all instances of:

1. Abuse of Suspected Abuse of a Child or Youth;
2. Neglect or Suspect Neglect of a Child or Youth; and
3. Any imminent dangers to the life of a Child or Youth.

## **How do Youth Workers file such a report?**

**Our partners at Childhelp National Abuse Hotline are available to answer your questions and help direct you to the appropriate state authorities.**

**Call them at 1-800-4-A-CHILD (1-800-422-4453).**

# Highlights (continued)

## **What else should a Youth Worker report?**

Whenever a Youth Worker makes a mandated report to state authorities, the Youth Worker must also file a Notice of Concern with his or her supervisor to ensure that Church leadership is also informed.

(A template Notice of Concern is included in this PDF for your reference.)

However, Youth Workers may also encounter violations of the Policies that do not rise to the level of a mandated report that needs to be made to state authorities. For example, a Youth Worker might observe someone engaging in inappropriate behavior (such as Bullying or Verbal Abuse) with a Child or Youth, or someone who has failed to uphold an appropriate boundary in an interaction with a Child or Youth that doesn't rise to the level of Abuse. These could include behavior between an adult and child or youth or between peers.

In such cases, the Youth Worker must file a Notice of Concern with his or her Supervisor. This is not about pointing fingers: it is about ensuring that boundaries are maintained and that potentially inappropriate conduct is addressed before it turns into something more serious.

## **What does it mean to be in compliance with the Policies?**

A Parish's compliance with the Policies includes two basic items:

1. Youth Workers are the only people who are allowed to participate in Youth Ministry Programs and Events; and
2. Youth Workers follow the requirements of the Policies when it comes to conduct, mandated reporting, etc.

# Description of Role

The following is a description of the general role and responsibilities of every Parish Youth Safety Administrator under the new Policies for the Safety of Children and Youth.

The Armatus System run by Praesidium is where the background checks and training components will be hosted and tracked.

## **Eligibility**

A parishioner is selected to administer compliance with these Policies for their Parish. Under the Policies, the Parish Administrator shall be the Parish Council President or their designee. However, the Parish Youth Safety Administrator may not be the Parish Priest or a clergyman.

## **Requirements**

Shall become a certified Youth Worker.

## **Responsibilities**

1. Enforces the Policies to create a safe environment in the Parish
  - Work with their Metropolis to become familiar with the screening and training requirements for their Metropolis and any applicable State laws (which must be followed).
  - Work with Praesidium to know the Armatus System and process. Administrators will be trained by Praesidium on how to use the Armatus System. Administrators will also have access to Praesidium's support team to help them navigate any challenges they encounter with the system.
  - Ensure compliance with the Policies at the Parish level.
2. Manages the Armatus System for the Parish
  - Enter the full legal name, email address, and phone number of each individual in the Parish who requires training and screening (potential Youth Workers) into Armatus.

# Description of Role (continued)

- Monitor compliance and communicate with anyone who is failing to comply.
  - Update contact information in screening AND training systems (compliance is tracked with accurate names and email addresses).
  - Archive anyone in Armatus who either expresses a desire to not follow compliance requirements or who will not be participating in any type of volunteer or employee role for some time (inactive individuals remain in the system but will not appear in Parish reports).
  - Parish Youth Safety Administrators will have the ability to easily run reports (specifically for their Parish) to keep track of any pending items by individuals. Administrators will be responsible for making sure screening and training requirements have been met before individuals can engage in any Youth Ministry Programs or Events.
3. Oversees ongoing monitoring to ensure continued Parish compliance with the Policies
- Update Armatus as members end participation so that the system is a bank of ACTIVE members.
  - Reactivate members in Armatus if participation begins again.



# Work Checklist for Parish Youth Safety Administrator



**1**

## **Ensure that your Parish signs a Service Agreement with Praesidium, the official youth safety vendor of the Archdiocese**

- The designated agent for your Parish (either the Parish Priest or Parish Council President) will sign this contract on behalf of the Parish
- This Service Agreement will allow Parishes to take their next step and begin assembling their roster of potential Youth Workers
- Specifically, the Service Agreement has important requirements about maintaining the confidentiality of every Youth Worker's personal information

**2**

## **Submit your full legal name, email address, and phone number to your Metropolis Youth Safety Administrator**

- It's important that both the Archdiocese and your Metropolis know who you are, and how to contact you, as part of your youth safety responsibilities
- Open and clear lines of communication are key to this work

# Work Checklist (continued)

## 3

### **Successfully complete Armatus database training**

- Our youth safety vendor, Praesidium, will offer online video training and quizzes to all Parish Youth Safety Administrators
- This will prepare you to use and manage the secure Armatus database, which will include profiles for all Youth Workers and records of their compliance with the training and screening requirements
- Please note that Praesidium is our official youth safety vendor. If you have any questions, you can contact their support desk at support@praesidiuminc.com or 800-743-6354 (press option 1 for tech support) to answer your questions and provide additional support

## 4

### **Receive contact information from potential Youth Workers**

- Every potential Youth Worker will submit their full legal name, email address, and phone number for entry into the Armatus System
- Parish Youth Safety Administrators must keep this information secure at all times
- Use of a Google Form can allow potential Youth Workers to input contact information and have it automatically populate a spreadsheet
- A template registration form and checklist is included at the end of this PDF for your reference; please collect the information in this format

# Work Checklist (continued)

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## **Submit this spreadsheet of potential Youth Workers to Praesidium**

- This list should include all the people who will be serving in Youth Ministry Programs and Events in the year ahead
- This is a key part in the preparation of our ministries: rather than scramble for people at the last minute, we want to ensure that your Parish has a team of Youth Workers ready and able to participate in Youth Ministry Programs and Events throughout the year
- Potential Youth Workers will then receive individual, automatically generated emails containing a web link. This link will allow them to complete their Youth Worker registration in the Armatus System

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## **Follow up with all potential Youth Workers to ensure that they have access to the online training and background check portal**

- It will take time for individual Youth Workers to complete their training and order their background check
- We want to ensure that all potential Youth Workers are prepared and certified as soon as possible
- Your reminders will help ensure that your Parish Youth Ministry Programs and Events can begin on time, with a complete and prepared staff

# Work Checklist (continued)

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## **Prepare a Parish Compliance Letter which will include the complete roster of Youth Workers**

- This Letter will include the full roster of Youth Workers for your Parish, and an indication that they have successfully completed the three requirements necessary to becoming a Youth Worker (registration, training, and screening)
- You will be able to see whether individual Youth Workers have successfully completed their required training and the required background screening
- If a Youth Worker has not passed the required background screening, you will see an indication of this (though not the detailed results of the screening; review of this is the responsibility of the Metropolis Background Check Review Board)

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## **Send your Parish Compliance Letter to your Metropolis Youth Safety Administrator**

- This report will need to be signed by you, as Parish Youth Safety Administrator, and your Parish Priest
- A template Parish Compliance Letter is available as Exhibit 7 of the Policies (attached at the end of this packet)

# Work Checklist (continued)

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## **Monitor Parish Youth Ministry Programs and Events to ensure that only Youth Workers are participating**

- As Parish Youth Safety Administrator, you are the “eyes on the ground” and the person that is best positioned to ensure compliance with the Policies
- Remain in regular contact with your Metropolis Youth Safety Administrator to offer updates on compliance and ask any relevant questions

**Thank you very much for your desire and dedication to ensuring the well-being and safety of our Children and Youth.**

Please direct any questions or concerns to:  
Email: [youthsafety@goarch.org](mailto:youthsafety@goarch.org) | Phone: 480.440.2277

## **ONLY FOR METROPOLIS OF PITTSBURGH**

The Metropolis of Pittsburgh has policies in place requiring additional steps for Clergy, Parish Council Members, paid Staff and Youth Workers to be approved.

Please direct any questions or concerns for the Metropolis of Pittsburgh to:  
Email: [youthsafety@pittsburgh.goarch.org](mailto:youthsafety@pittsburgh.goarch.org) | Phone: 412.621.8543