

## **VOLUNTEERS**

At St. James School, volunteers play an integral role in the education of our children through involvement in the many activities of the school. There are many opportunities for volunteering and your time and talents are vital to the operation of our school. We recognize the vast and valuable resources our parents have to offer and we look forward to working with you to accomplish our goal to make your child's educational experience both meaningful and productive. **All volunteers** must complete all facets of the Safe Environment Policy listed below to ensure that our school and all of its respective programs are truly safe environments for all of our children.

## **SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY**

The Diocese of Pittsburgh's Safe Environment Policy is a program designed to create a safe environment for children throughout the diocese and here at St. James School. It was created to take reasonable measures to assure that school personnel and volunteers who have regular contact with minors are committed to providing a safe environment for our school children, are capable of identifying and preventing abuse of children, and have no personal history of behavior that would be a threat to children. It is a means to insure that our school not only fulfills the mandate of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops as outlined in the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* but also meet the requirements of state and federal law.

## **SAFE ENVIRONMENT REQUIREMENTS**

All school volunteers, working with children 18 years and younger are required to fulfill requirements of the diocese of Pittsburgh's Safe Environment Policy PRIOR TO THEIR VOLUNTEERING AT OUR SCHOOL. The policy requires that all volunteers who have regular contact with the children of our school complete the following:

1. **Diocesan Database and National Criminal Record Check** (this can be done on your home computer or if preferred, a paper application may be completed).
2. **Pennsylvania Criminal Record Check** (this is completed with step 1 above)
3. **Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance** (paper application to be completed and returned to Susan Ponticello at the St. James Parish rectory office).
4. **Pastoral Code of Conduct** (now included as part the database, step 1 – read booklet and check box on-line indicating your consent). If completing a paper application for step 1, you will receive this booklet in paper form.
5. **Child Protective Service Law Acknowledgment** (now included as part of the database, step 1 – read booklet and check box on-line indicating your consent). If completing a paper application for step 1, you will also receive this booklet in paper form.
6. **Attend a Protecting God's Children Workshop** (Workshops are posted on the Diocese of Pittsburgh Website, [www.diopitt.org](http://www.diopitt.org)).

### **Additional information regarding the Safe Environment Policy Requirements:**

- To request a Safe Environment Policy packet for new volunteers contact Susan Ponticello, our Safe Environment Coordinator, at 412-741-6650 ext. 315 or e-mail, [sponticello@saintjames-sewickley.org](mailto:sponticello@saintjames-sewickley.org).
- **DIOCESAN ONLINE DATABASE:** For the diocesan database instructions, please go to the diocese of Pittsburgh website, [www.diopitt.org](http://www.diopitt.org) and click on the Safe Environment Database tab under the Protecting God's Children heading on the left side of the page. The instruction card for the database is also included under this heading. Please contact Susan Ponticello for the Access Code. Once this application is completed, it will also be used to obtain a Pennsylvania State Police criminal record check. When asked to choose your site, please be sure to select "Sewickley-St. James School".
- **PENNSYLVANIA CRIMINAL RECORD CHECK:** This is required for all volunteers, ages 18 and above, who work in ministry with children or teens. This is completed with the database application above and must be **renewed every five years**.
- **PENNSYLVANIA CHILD ABUSE HISTORY CLEARANCE:** This is also required for all volunteers, ages 18 and above, who work in ministry with children. This too, must be **renewed every five years**.
  - You may request a PA Child Abuse History Clearance application form from Susan Ponticello at the rectory office.
  - You will need to complete and sign the form and then return it to the rectory office.
  - The school will pay for all clearances
  - You do not need to list your Social Security Number if your purpose for completing the application is for volunteering.
  - We will attach a copy of your PA Criminal Record Check to send with your Child Abuse History Clearance Application.
  - Please also complete the release form which will allow the school to receive the results directly from the state.
- **PROTECTING GOD'S CHILDREN:** The Protecting God's Children Workshop is required for all adults, age 18 and older, who wish to volunteer in ministry with children. It is an excellent program that truly equips adults to create safer environments for children. For a list of all Protecting God's Children Workshops in our area, under the diocese of Pittsburgh website, [www.diopitt.org](http://www.diopitt.org), click Protecting God's Children Workshops. You will only need to attend this workshop one time. Please note, because of the sensitive material in this class, children should not attend.