

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP
DIocese OF CONCORD, NH

Handwritten signature

January 26, 2009

The Honorable Kelly A. Ayotte, Esq.
Attorney General
Department of Justice
33 Capitol Street
Concord, NH 03301-6397

Dear General Ayotte:

Thank you for your letter of January 23, 2009, and the copy of the December 11, 2008 Assessment Report from KPMG. I first want to express my appreciation to you, your staff, and the auditors from KPMG for all that you have done to contribute to the success of our safe environment program. Your work has contributed greatly to the effort and success of all those in the Church who make and sustain this as a priority in the life of our parishes, schools, and diocesan institutions.

Sexual abuse of a minor is a terrible crime, and we are sorry, sad, and ashamed that this crime occurred in the Church. As a Church, we remain firm in our commitment to assist anyone who has been harmed or affected by the painful reality of sexual abuse of a minor and to ensure that a safe environment for children and young people remains a permanent priority in the life of our Church.

I am pleased to respond to the following specific issues you raised in your letter.

1. Following the interviews with diocesan staff by the KPMG auditors in November 2008, the Delegates for Ministerial Conduct have revised the administrative protocols to ensure that Mary Ellen D'Intino, who now is the Compliance Officer and Director of Safe Environment Programs, is included in all aspects of ongoing investigations. As you may know, she has been aware of the details of such matters through her participation in the Diocesan Review Board; however, she is now included in the group of individuals first notified of a report and in the ongoing investigation of reports.
2. I have instructed the Delegates for Ministerial Conduct to review the current administrative protocol for accountability of pastors, school principals, and diocesan institutional leaders regarding compliance with diocesan policy. I have also asked the Delegates for Ministerial Conduct to implement a plan to ensure that all Safe Environment Coordinators have reviewed the Screening and Training Protocol and the Code and Policy in a timely manner. A revised protocol will be reviewed with the Diocesan Review Board on or before June 30, 2009. We remain committed to the ongoing enhancement of this aspect of our program and to the further development of a culture of accountability and safety in the Church.

3. Immediately following the interview of diocesan staff with the KPMG auditors in November 2008, an administrative policy was initiated that provides for the immediate notation that a person is not eligible for ministry, and this control cannot be changed except by the Delegates for Ministerial Conduct, the Compliance Officer, or the Safe Environment Assistant.

I have instructed the Delegates for Ministerial Conduct and the Compliance Officer to continue to work with experts to enhance the safe environment database so as to ensure that "restricted" names cannot be entered into the database.

The Delegates for Ministerial Conduct are studying ways in which the safe environment recordkeeping system can be further enhanced. A proposal for doing so will be reviewed with the Diocesan Review Board on or before June 30, 2009.

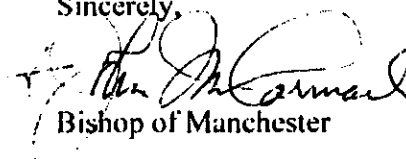
4. I am pleased to accept your and the KPMG auditors' recommendation that the Diocesan Review Board review its current plan for ongoing oversight and audit of the diocesan safe environment program. I have instructed the Compliance Officer to work with the Diocesan Review Board to develop a plan for my review and approval on or before June 30, 2009.

In accordance with your request, I have asked Brian Quirk to provide your Office with a fourth Action Plan by February 9, 2009, in response to your letter and the KPMG Assessment Report. As has been the case with our first three Action Plans, I am confident that this Action Plan will meet with your approval and will enable us to bring this matter to a close in accordance with our Agreement and the Court's orders.

In closing, I reiterate my thanks to you and your staff and for your expression of confidence in our work. The positive developments over the last several years are a tribute to your dedication to public safety and, I believe, our intent as a Church to cooperate in a genuine way with you and others who are responsible for the safety of the people of New Hampshire.

With prayers for our common goal to ensure a safe community for all people, I remain

Sincerely,



Bishop of Manchester