



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

DIocese OF BRIDGEPORT

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DECREE

As Catholics, we all share a sacred obligation to protect the children, youth and vulnerable adults in our community.

In the Diocese of Bridgeport, our Safe Environment program and victim assistance ministry has been in place since 2003, and it has made great strides in prevention, detection and early intervention efforts. However, we constantly face new challenges, and therefore must update existing policies, incorporate best practices and integrate Safe Environment measures in everything that we do.

In light of this sacred obligation to protect all children, youth and vulnerable adults, I hereby issue a newly revised set of guidelines and procedures that are consistent with the revisions to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops *USCCB Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*.

All our updated Safe Environment policies are now found in a single handbook that includes local implementation guidelines for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' audit process, mandatory reporting procedures and laws of the State of Connecticut and updates to our Diocesan 2003 Sexual Misconduct Policy and the 2004 Code of Conduct. As a part of the revised policies, Diocesan clergy, employees and volunteers will now undergo ongoing Safe Environment training and will be required to consent to background checks every five or ten years, depending upon their ministry.

The *Safe Environment Handbook 2015* will be widely distributed throughout the Diocese in print form and will also be available online at www.bridgeportdiocese.com.

The revised *Safe Environment Handbook 2015*, with all its accompanying procedures and requirements is promulgated for use throughout the Diocese of Bridgeport, effective November 30, 2014, the First Sunday of Advent.

Given at Bridgeport this 30th day of November, 2014.

Frank J. Caggiano

Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano
Bishop of Bridgeport

Robert Kinnally

Fr. Robert Kinnally
Chancellor

