

DIOCESE OF PROVIDENCE

80 Saint Mary's Drive
Cranston, RI 02920

401-941-0760 • Fax: 401-941-1195
Email: compliance@dioceseofprovidence.org

OFFICE OF COMPLIANCE

September 3, 2018

Dear Parents:

In light of the recent press coverage concerning the reports of past sexual abuse of children by clergy in Pennsylvania, you have a right to know what actions have been taken to keep your child safe.

In 1993, the Diocese of Providence took the unprecedented step of establishing the Office of Education and Compliance—nearly ten years before the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops adopted a formal Charter for the Protection of Children, in 2002. Moving aggressively to address the problem of clerical sexual misconduct, the Diocese hired a trained law enforcement investigator and former Lieutenant of the Massachusetts State Police to be its first Director. For the past 25 years, this office, which is now the Office of Compliance, has vigorously, tenaciously and transparently conducted investigations, background checks and child protection training programs.

Every allegation received by the Office of Compliance over the last two decades, regardless of credibility, has been promptly and fully reported to law enforcement. This cooperative approach allows the police complete freedom and independence to conduct an objective investigation, and to convict and punish criminals.

Independently, the diocesan Advisory Board for the Protection of Child and Youth assesses cases and makes recommendations to the Bishop regarding suitability for ministry. This Board has recently included a former Rhode Island Attorney General, a former Major of the RI State Police, a former Rhode Island Child Advocate and the former Director of the DCYF. Any allegation credibly established – regardless of when it occurred – results in permanent removal from ministry.

There is also much activity to prevent the occurrence of abuse. Annually, the Office of Compliance conducts over 4,000 Bureau of Criminal Investigation Checks, as well as Safe Environment Training Programs for all employees and volunteers having regular conduct with children in the schools and youth programs in the Diocese. These elements require regular renewal every three years.

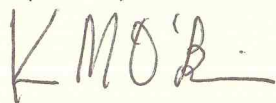
Finally, we are always looking to improve and implement best practices. In 2016, following the events at a private, non-Catholic school, we worked voluntarily with the Department of Attorney General to establish a formalized protocol for reporting allegations to provide supplemental transparency which exceed requirements set forth in the Rhode Island General Laws.

These policies and procedures have produced significant and positive results. Substantial and measurable progress has been made as evidenced by the systematic statistical decrease showing that few incidents have occurred since the 1990's. The overwhelming majority of claims are from behavior many decades ago.

If you know or suspect your child has been a victim of sexual abuse at the hands of a Catholic clergyman, a school or youth ministry employee or a volunteer, please contact me immediately at the Office of Compliance, (401) 941-0760.

Your child's safety is our first priority.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "KMO'B". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized font.

Major Kevin M. O'Brien (Ret.)
Director
Office of Compliance
Diocese of Providence