



OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT ~ CATHOLIC SCHOOL SUPPORT SERVICES

ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF BROOKLYN

310 PROSPECT PARK WEST

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11215

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February 26, 2019

Dear Parents and Guardians,

It is a pleasure to welcome you back from last week's Mid-Winter Recess and I hope that this finds you and your family well.

I wanted to bring to your attention a story that aired on News 12 Brooklyn last week highlighting the Diocese's continued emphasis on making sure our academies and parish schools are the safest they can be. In light of this report, along with recent news coverage regarding the "sexual abuse crisis within the Catholic Church", I thought this would be a good opportunity to communicate on this subject.

As noted in this news report, each of our academies and parish schools are required to have a crisis management plan which establishes an individualized school safety action plan which is reviewed and updated on a regular basis. The Office of the Superintendent~Catholic School Support Services has a crisis management team that receives input and advice from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and the New York City Police Department. This information is shared with all of our academies and parish schools in the interest of providing the safest environment possible for your children.

Please know that the Diocese of Brooklyn takes the responsibility of protecting our students, your children, very seriously. As you may be aware, in addition to safety preparedness and drills, all employees and volunteers working in our Catholic academies and parish schools are required to fully comply with regulations set forth by the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, established in 2002.

The Safe Environment Mandates include a three hour VIRTUS workshop entitled "Protecting God's Children." All clergy, teachers, parish and academy/school employees, catechists and volunteers who work directly with children MUST attend this VIRTUS training. Employees and volunteers must also sign and accept an official Code of Conduct, which requires that any allegation of sexual abuse be reported to the Diocesan Reporting Line (1-888-634-4499), which is referred to law enforcement authorities. Additionally, they must agree to initial and ongoing criminal background checks. All clergy and employees are required to read monthly VIRTUS bulletins which provide ongoing review and education on the prevention of abuse.

All students take part in the “Child Lures” sexual abuse awareness training program. The material from this program is age appropriate and is incorporated yearly in the regular school curriculum for all students.

Lastly, in the church’s ongoing concern for anyone that may have suffered sexual abuse, the Diocese has established an Office of Victim Assistance Ministry (718-623-5236) which provides ongoing outreach, support and referrals for services for victims-survivors. If you should have any further questions, please do not hesitate to speak with your Principal or contact my office at (718) 965-7300. Thank you for your support of Catholic education here in Brooklyn and Queens.

Sincerely,

Thomas Chadzutko

Thomas Chadzutko, Ed.D.
Superintendent ~Catholic School Support Services
R.C. Diocese of Brooklyn