



100 South Clinton Avenue
Suite 1500
Rochester, NY 14604

P 585.295.0550
TF 888.247.9764
F 585.295.0650
W StoneBridgeBP.com

October 12, 2023

Most Reverend Austin A. Vetter
Bishop of Helena
P.O. Box 1729
Helena, MT 59624

Dear Bishop Vetter:

Based on the results of our recently performed on-site audit of the Diocese of Helena, the Diocese has been found compliant with all audited Articles within the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* for the audit period of July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2023.

The conclusions reached as to the compliance of your Diocese are based upon inquiry, observation and the review of specifically requested documentation furnished to StoneBridge Business Partners during the course of this audit.

Thank you for your cooperation during this process.

Sincerely,

StoneBridge Business Partners

StoneBridge Business Partners
Rochester, New York

cc: Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection
Cassie Hall, Director of Human Resources and Safe Environment, Diocese of Helena



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P.O. Box 1729
Helena, MT 59624

Dear Bishop Vetter:

In accordance with our recent audit of the Diocese of Helena, for the period of July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2023, the following topics are being brought to your attention. These topics do not affect your compliance with the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*; they are simply suggestions for your consideration.

Article 2:

Topic: Per Article 2 of the *Charter and Essential Norm 5*, "...at least one member (of the Review Board) should be a priest who is an experienced and respected pastor of the diocese". The diocese currently has a retired pastor as a member of the diocesan review board.

Suggestion: We suggest the diocese consider identifying an active pastor to join the diocesan review board as part a succession plan for the review board.

Article 2 & 6:

Topic: The *Diocese of Helena Policy Regarding Abuse of Minors and Vulnerable Adults, Sexual Misconduct, and Sexual Harassment*, and the *Code of Pastoral Conduct* do not contain specific language regarding the acquisition, possession, and/or distribution of child pornography.

Suggestion: We suggest that the diocese consider updating its policy and Code of Pastoral Conduct to include specific language prohibiting the acquisition, possession and distribution of child pornography.

Article 12:

Topic: The diocese utilizes monthly bulletins as a means to remain current with safe environment information, however, the Diocese does not require clergy, seminarians, educators, employees or volunteers to complete a refresher safe environment training. If an individual falls more than six bulletins behind, they are inactivated from the database until the bulletins are completed. If an individual falls behind by twelve or more bulletins, they must complete the initial training process again in order to be active in the system.

Suggestion: We suggest that the diocese consider implementing a policy for renewing safe environment training for all employees, volunteers and clergy on a periodic basis (suggested every 5 years in conjunction with the background check renewal). The refresher training is a good way to ensure that everyone is aware of the importance of the program and will provide them with any new information regarding the protection of children and young people that may have developed from the last time they received training.

Article 12 & 13:

Topic: Although the diocese is in communication with parishes and schools on a regular basis regarding the status of safe environment programs, there are no formal parish/school audits. Site visits can be an effective tool to assess compliance with safe environment requirements and foster communication between the Chancery and parishes/schools.

Suggestion: We suggest that the diocese consider the feasibility of implementing a specific process to periodically visit the parish and school locations in order to review documentation and assess compliance with the safe environment program requirements.

By signing below, you attest that you have read and received our suggestions from the *Charter* audit process.



Most Reverend Austin A. Vetter
Bishop of Helena

Thank you for the efforts that you are taking to protect the children and young people in the Diocese of Helena. Please return a signed copy via email to USCCBCharterAudits@StoneBridgeBP.com at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,



StoneBridge Business Partners
Rochester, New York

cc: Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection
Cassie Hall, Director of Human Resources and Safe Environment, Diocese of Helena