



*St. Veronica Catholic School
 Celebrating Fifty Years of
 Faith, Community, and Excellence
 1958-2008*

*St. Veronica Catholic School
 434 Alida Way
 South San Francisco, CA 94080
 650-589-3909
 www.stveronicacatholicsschool.org
 January 14, 2009*

Dear Parents,

Thank you for your attendance Monday night at the School Guild Meeting and the opportunity to introduce the safety programs promulgated by the Archdiocese of San Francisco for the 2008-2009 academic year. As noted last evening, the objective is simply to do all we can to protect the children and youth we serve. The letter from Archbishop George Niederauer, printed in the *Parent-Student Handbook* (p. 53), provides a comprehensive explanation of the necessity of such programs and the commitment of the Archdiocese to the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People entitled Promise to Protect, Pledge to Heal*. The archdiocesan website (www.sfarchdiocese.org) is a wonderful resource. If you click on the tab Protecting Children, you will find the text of the Charter and other important information. The website offers a summary of the Safe Environment Programs and an update is sure to be added soon. This note is simply a summary and a resource providing much of the information that was presented Monday evening. Please note the information will be posted on the school’s website for future reference. Again, thank you for this honor and privilege to serve you and minister with you as we watch your children grow in grace and love.

May God bless you and all you do,

Ms. Teresa Pallitto
 Principal, St. Veronica Catholic School

*Archdiocesan Safety Program
 Summary of Parent Presentation
 offered on Monday, January 12, 2009*

Safety is the basis for many of our programs. In 2002, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a Charter in which each bishop signed committing himself to protect children and young people. The bishops then reaffirmed their commitment in 2005 and, in doing so, have worked to ensure that “safe environment programs are in place to assist parents and children – and those who work with children – in preventing harm to young people” (*Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, Preamble). The Archdiocese of San Francisco has worked hard to comply with all aspects of the Charter and has focused in two specific areas: education and evaluation. In terms of education, we have seen an evolution of various programs tried and tested which have laid a strong foundation for the current options. Evaluations are on-going as parishes and

parish schools mandate different requirements for volunteers falling into specific categories such as completion of the online line course at www.shieldthevulnerable.org, livescan, background checks, and volunteer forms on file at each location.

The new education programs are as follows:

Students in grades kindergarten through three will be instructed through the program issued by the Committee for Children entitled *Talk about Touching*. Information regarding the Committee for Children can be found at www.cfchildren.org. In all sincerity, *Talk about Touching* is not new. This was the required program before *Out of Harms Way* and *Smart Kids/Safe Kids* were adopted and our primary teachers integrated this instrument in the Family Life programs taught in the spring. The Scope and Sequence (an outline of the concepts introduced and mastered) for each grade will be posted on the website. The Scope and Sequence for each grade is divided into three main categories: Personal Safety, Touching Safety, and Assertiveness and Support. The program comes with a video, *What Do I Say Now?* which parents may check out from the office and view at their convenience. We would be grateful if you checked out the video and returned it after a reasonable time period so other families may avail themselves of this resource. The program is taught through discussions stimulated by a series of photographs which address various components of the three main categories as appropriate for each grade level. The idea is not to scare, but to provide children with the necessary tools to be safe and to speak to adults when they feel uncomfortable or insecure.

Students in grades four through eight will participate in an online course through Shield the Vulnerable, a service of LawRoom in support of the Safe Environment for Children Program. For those of you with students in Catholic high schools, they will participate in an online course also. There are two programs – one for students in grades four through eight and another for students in grades nine through twelve. Additional information can be found in the attached letter. Please note – if you completed the Shield the Vulnerable course, you can return to www.shieldthevulnerable.org, login, and take the course yourself. When you go to the tab “Diocese Sign Up: Grades 4-12”, click on the tab for adults. Students will take this course with their classroom teachers.