

07/09/2019

## The Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Atlanta issues important update concerning youth safety policies



## METROPOLIS OF ATLANTA

The Greek Orthodox Metropolis has issued the following update concerning youth safety policies:

September 6, 2019

To All Clergy and Parish Council Presidents of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Atlanta:

My Beloved Brothers and Sisters in the Lord,

I greet you with a spirit of love and great joy, as we welcome this Ecclesiastical New Year! May our Lord and Savior continue to bless us with health, peace of mind and heart, as well as the strength to continue our beloved ministries.

I am very pleased to announce the eagerly awaited implementation of new policies concerning our children and youth.

In 2018, the Holy Eparchial Synod, the Archdiocesan Council and the National Clergy Laity Congress approved a new set of procedures and requirements intended to improve safety for the children in all our Church programs. These very important “Policies for the Safety of Children and Youth” are and must be of urgent concern for all of us who work with children in every aspect of this Metropolis, including every parish and youth ministry.

The new requirements demand that every single lay person who works with youth in any way, and all clergy, move rapidly into receiving their certification as ‘Youth Workers’, in order to protect our children.

In her role as the Youth Coordinator for the Metropolis of Atlanta, I have naturally appointed Ms. Monica Gjerde as our Youth Safety Metropolis Administrator. I therefore prayerfully ask that you work diligently to meet her requests for compliance with this important program. Many religious and charitable institutions, including some of our own parishes, have been doing training and background checks for years.

The implementation process begins this month and the first step is critical. By September 16th, each parish must designate its ‘Youth Safety Parish Administrator’ and that person must compile a list of all individuals in the parish that work with youth in any way. That Youth Safety Parish Administrator will be trained in the process of registering all youth workers for your parish. I offer my sincere praise and thanks to the 85% of our parishes who have already designated their Administrators. For those communities who have not yet done so, I ask that you please designate your Parish Administrator and communicate his or her name and

contact information to Ms. Monica, our Metropolis Administrator.

All youth workers will be trained by annual on-line courses, as well as pass a criminal background check every two years. The training is straightforward, informative and easy to follow and, together with the background check form, should only take about 2 and a half hours to complete. Under this new mandate of our Church, unless a youth worker completes this process by the end of this year, he or she cannot be allowed to work with parish youth.

Again, there are two obvious first steps for this month of September: 1) naming a Youth Safety Parish Administrator, and 2) gathering a complete list of both paid and volunteer workers whose efforts include contact with children. Anyone who does anything that involves contact with children will have to be registered, trained, and screened by the end of the year, with no exceptions. Please be aware that your Holy Metropolis will be shortly sending your Church and leadership all that is needed to comply under these Policies for the Safety of Children and Youth.

At any time, you can also find youth safety information, at [www.goarch.org/safety](http://www.goarch.org/safety) or find a new link on Archdiocesan home page at [www.goarch.org](http://www.goarch.org).

Thank you for being part of this effort. May our Lord bless and protect you, your family and your Church family as we begin this Ecclesiastical New Year. I remain,

Paternaly yours with love in the Lord

**+ A L E X I O S**

**Metropolitan of Atlanta**

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- Source: [atlmeteropolis.org](http://atlmeteropolis.org)