

Megan's Law Update and Requirements

Revised August 20, 2007

Since 1996, individuals in California have had access at police stations to the names and addresses of registered sex offenders. Effective January 1, 2005, this information is available to anyone on the Megan's Law website: www.MegansLaw.ca.gov. The website also contains an excellent summary of Megan's Law and its implications.

IT IS CRITICAL THAT YOU SPEND TIME REVIEWING THE MEGAN'S LAW WEBSITE AND THAT YOU EDUCATE YOURSELF ON THE MORE RESTRICTIVE ARCHDIOCESE OF LOS ANGELES "ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY" FOUND IN THE BULLET POINTS BELOW.

Basic Information about Megan's Law

As stated on the Megan's Law website for the State of California, any individual guilty of sexual misconduct with a child under the age of 16 is prohibited from working, as an employee or volunteer, with minors directly and in an unaccompanied setting where he/she has more than incidental contact or supervisory or disciplinary power over minors.

Under Megan's Law, all registered sex offenders who may be volunteers or employees in the above settings are required by law to disclose to their employer or to any place where they volunteer that they are registered sex offenders. Failure to do so violates the law.

Archdiocese of Los Angeles "Zero Tolerance Policy"

Under the "Zero Tolerance Policy" of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, any person guilty of sexual misconduct with **a minor under the age of 18:**

- **may not have any paid or volunteer assignment in any "ministry" in the Archdiocese, and**
- **may not volunteer in any "non-ministerial" activity or event where he/she has any possibility of more than incidental contact or supervisory or disciplinary power over minors.**

As members of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles community, we want to assure that we are in compliance with both Megan's Law and our "Zero Tolerance Policy." Should you become aware that a registered sex offender or any person subject to the "Zero Tolerance Policy" is in your parish or school community, it is important that you immediately contact your pastor, school principal, work supervisor or the chairperson of your volunteer group, as applicable, to assure that appropriate action can be taken.

Thank you for all you are doing to safeguard those under your care.

As members of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles community, we want to assure that we are in compliance with both Megan's Law and the Archdiocesan "Zero Tolerance Policy." Should you become aware that a registered sex offender or any person subject to this "Zero Tolerance Policy" is in your parish or school

community, it is important that you immediately contact your pastor, school principal, work supervisor or the chairperson of your volunteer group, as applicable, to assure that appropriate action can be taken.

Megan's Law and Implications for Parishes and Schools

The State of California and the Archdiocese of Los Angeles have adopted rules and policies concerning persons who are registered sex offenders in an effort to enhance the safety of all children and youth.

The State law is generally referred to as "Megan's Law." Since January 2005, information concerning anyone who is required to register is available to anyone on the Megan's Law website: www.MegansLaw.ca.gov. The website also has an excellent summary of Megan's Law and its implications.

It is important that we continue to educate all parish and school staff and volunteers (including day care, religious education, youth ministries, etc.) about the law and its limitations. Information about your response should you identify a registered sex offender within your community is described below.

As stated on the Megan's Law website, any one individual guilty of sexual misconduct with a child under the age of 16 is prohibited from working, as an employee or volunteer, with minors directly and in an unaccompanied setting where they have more than incidental contact or have supervisory or disciplinary power over the child. Also stated, all registered sex offenders who may be volunteers or employees in the above settings are required by law to disclose to you that they are registered sex offenders. Failure to do so is a new, separate violation of Megan's Law.

Under the Archdiocese of Los Angeles "Zero Tolerance Policy" announced by Cardinal Mahony in 2002, any person guilty of sexual misconduct with a minor may not have any assignment in any ministry in the Archdiocese and may not actively volunteer in a situation that places the person in an unaccompanied setting where they have more than incidental contact or have supervisory or disciplinary power over minors.

After reviewing the information on the Megan's Law website, if you know that anyone in the parish who is involved in any ministry (such as music, liturgy, Eucharist), or in any religious education program (including both youth and adult programs), or in any volunteer activity where he/she is regularly with minors, or anyone who is a parent, guardian or similarly active in your school is a registered sex offender, please follow the process as numbered below. Please also follow this process if someone discloses that he or she is a registered sex offender. The pastor, principal, the Director of Religious Education (DRE)/Coordinator or other parish staff, as appropriate, need to be actively involved in the process. The Archdiocese is available to assist. If the matter involves a school or religious education situation, the principal needs to contact his/her supervisor at the Department of Catholic Schools and the DRE/Coordinator needs to contact his/her regional coordinator, as applicable, before proceeding with the following steps:

1. If you are a person in authority, you need to call in the person listed as a registered sex offender on the Megan's Law website and give him/her the opportunity to disclose this if he/she has not already done so.

2. Discuss the "Letter of Agreement" statement with the person and have him/her sign it.
3. Inform the staff, faculty or others who deal directly with the person of the situation.

If, in your review of the Megan's Law website or otherwise, you identify any of the registered sex offenders who you think could jeopardize the safety of any youth or adult in your community, you should immediately discuss the matter with the appropriate authority to determine what actions should be taken.

If you have questions, please contact Margaret Graf, Archdiocesan General Counsel, at 213 637 7511, or William Heinen, Director of Human Resources at 213 637 7576.

Registered Sex Offender Letter of Agreement (Sample)

Letter of Agreement

(NOTE: Use language in brackets and adapt to particular facts at parish, school or both.)

DATE: _____

TO: _____ [Principal] [Pastor]

_____ [School] [Parish]

FROM: _____

RE: Agreement with _____ [School] [Parish]

As a registered sex offender who participates at _____ Parish and parent/guardian of a student at _____ [School] [Parish], I agree and understand as follows:

1. I may not hold any position related to the [school] [parish] which puts me in contact with children other than my own. I understand this limitation. I understand that this limitation includes any participation in any ministry or in any groups involving youth in my parish. I will inform the other parents with whom any of my children have regular contact of my status.
2. If I have children in the parish school, I understand that this limits how I fulfill my Service Hours. The following are the conditions of agreement regarding my [Service Hours Commitment to the school] [volunteer activities that may be undertaken by me at the parish]: NOTE: Complete as appropriate but remember that both Archdiocesan policies and Megan's Law limit and may preclude participation.
3. I will not appear on campus or on the parish grounds unless accompanied by another adult who is aware of my status and who is cleared as a volunteer or staff person working with children or youth at the parish or school.
4. When on campus or on the parish grounds, I will use the designated rest room and only when accompanied by another adult.
5. This letter may be shown (but not provided) to others who inquire about my status or presence on school or parish grounds.

SIGNED:

_____ (Person sending letter)

_____ (Date)

_____ (Principal if involving the school)

_____ (Date)

_____ (Pastor, whether involving only parish or parish
and school)

_____ (Date)

Revised August 20, 2007

Helpful Links

- [Office of Child & Youth Protection of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops](#)
- [Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People](#)
- [Los Angeles District Attorney: Protecting Our Children](#)

©2008 The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Los Angeles. All rights reserved.